THE GARDEN OF ROSES
· OF OUR LADY ·

The Garden of Roses of Our Lady

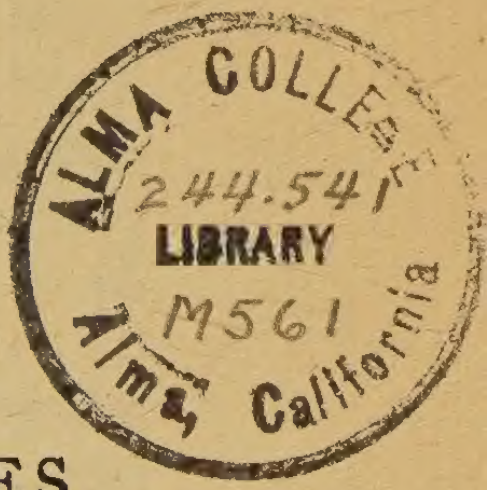
Second Impression.

The Garden of Roses of Our Lady

The Excellences of the Rosary and the Best Method of reciting it

By FR M. MESCHLER, S.J.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION



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THE TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

IN the ages of faith England was known as "Mary's Dowry," and it behoves us Catholics then, who pride ourselves on the title of "Mary's children," to do all in our power to win back dear England to the Faith. To this end we must labour by prayer and example.

Not only must we pray often, we must also try to imitate the virtues shown forth in the Mysteries; for the Rosary is composed of both vocal and mental prayer; and mental prayer, or meditation, is of little value unless made practical.

And here I would state that anyone who can master the methods of reciting the Rosary as set forth in this little book can just as easily meditate. So that in

learning to recite the Rosary the faithful soul learns also how to practise mental prayer.

The pious members of the Guilds and Confraternities of the Holy Rosary are doing a grand work for themselves and for the Church. If all would show their love for Mary in like manner, by practising devoutly her chief devotion, then would be realized the ardent desire of Cardinal Wiseman as expressed in his prayer for the conversion of England: "May her sweet name be lisped by little ones and linger on the lips of the aged and the dying; may it be invoked by the afflicted and hymned by the joyful, that this Star of the Sea being their protection and their guide, all may come to the harbour of eternal salvation, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

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The Garden of Roses
OF OUR LADY

CHAPTER I
The Mystical Garden of Roses

I was exalted . . . as a rose plant in Jericho.
—*Eccles* xxiv, 18.

LONG ago did the old German poets tell us of a beautiful garden at Worms on the banks of the Rhine; long have they sung its beauties in varied strains. Crimhilda, the fair and haughty daughter of the king, found all her delights in this garden of roses. Strong and valorous were the champions who guarded it, so that none could pluck therein a single rose without first holding fierce and strenuous combat with the defenders of the gates. Crimhilda herself crowned the victor's brow.

Those, say the poets, were days of magnificence and splendour.

But to-day all this has disappeared. The roses, the knights, the king's daughter, all are gone; nothing is left us but traditionary song.

Yet there is now in the bosom of the Catholic Church a garden of roses far lovelier, far more resplendent than that of which poets sang so long ago; it is a garden full of flowers, exhaling the odours of sweet incense, the incense of prayer. There is within this garden a Queen of perfect grace and of beauty unexcelled. Moreover, it is guarded and protected by thousands and thousands of devoted servants of that Queen, who look after it with mindful care.

The mystical garden of roses of our Lady is the devotion of the holy Rosary. It is because of her great love for this garden that this holy Virgin loves to be called "Queen of the most holy Rosary."

This is the garden about which I wish

to speak to you. I would like, in some little way, to sing its incomparable beauties; to open to you its golden gates; to show you, as far as possible, its magnificence and fruitfulness. May you find in it your solace and delight! May you earnestly desire to be enlisted in the number of those worthy subjects of our Queen of the most holy Rosary!

CHAPTER II

Origin of this Garden

The Most High Himself hath founded her.
—*Ps.* lxxxvi, 5.

YOU must know that from the earliest times the devout clients of our Lady were accustomed to salute their Queen every day by reciting in her honour a certain number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys," a custom that we meet with as early as the fifth century This devotion was known under various titles, such as "The Crown of Mary," "The Psalter of Mary," and "The Breviary of Lay Folk," all of which names denoted the same devotion, except perhaps for a difference in the number of "Paters" and "Aves" recited.

The Rosary in its present form, such as we recite it to-day, owes its origin to St Dominic. According to the belief that has been handed down, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and recommended him to preach the devotion of the Rosary. This was about the year 1206. The saint fulfilled his mission with much fervour and zeal, and the Catholic world, having welcomed the devotion with great love and enthusiasm, the Church approved of it, adopted it and enriched it with innumerable indulgences. Soon there was founded "The Confraternity of the Rosary," with the object of practising the devotion, which spread throughout the Catholic Church with wonderful rapidity. Thus was the practice of reciting the Rosary perpetuated in the Church, while at the same time a pious association was formed, which now numbers millions of members.

However, this tells only of the *exterior* origin and institution of the Rosary; for the Rosary has another origin, more ancient and full of mystery.

"What is it?" you ask. For answer, I will ask you a simple question: "When you recite the Rosary, how do you begin? Is it not with the 'I believe'? and do you know *why* it so begins? For there must surely be some reason for it. I will tell you.

The "Apostles' Creed," or "I believe," is our simplest profession of faith; and it is not by mere chance that we begin the holy Rosary by reciting that Creed. For between the Rosary and the profession of faith, there is an intimate and close relation. It is this: what you say in the Creed with a few short, simple words, is the very thing that provides you with the material for weaving together the garland of roses that is formed by the three parts of the Rosary. From the few words, "and

was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," spring all the Joyful Mysteries; upon the words, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried," are founded all the Sorrowful Mysteries; and, lastly, from the simple sentence, "rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven," we compose the Glorious Crown of the Rosary.

Hence the great importance the Apostles' Creed holds in regard to the Rosary; the Rosary springs from the Creed; and as the Creed is the brief profession of our Catholic faith, it is, in a way, the seed and root whence spring the roses for our Lady's chaplet. This chaplet is no more than the Creed unfolded and in blossom, in the same way as the "I believe" is itself the explanation and development of the Sign of the Cross.

From the buds of the Creed blossom three kinds of roses: five white roses,

which are the Joyful Mysteries; five crimson roses, which are the Sorrowful Mysteries; and five yellow or golden roses, which are the Glorious Mysteries.

Well then, having seen how the Rosary really is founded on our profession of faith, who else can be its author and first founder but He who formed the very basis of our faith, and who was the living subject of its mysteries? in a word, who other than Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer? He, with Mary His Mother, took part in all the mysteries which we contemplate in reciting our Lady's chaplet. The life of Jesus and Mary is the beautiful garden sown with roses, in which we recreate and solace ourselves by the recitation of the holy Rosary; it is a garden planted on the holy soil of the Gospel and of our holy faith, in which faith it flourishes and is adorned with a marvellous and exuberant verdure.

You have now seen how the holy Rosary is a solid, agreeable and pious devotion, which, besides having the great Saint Dominic for its herald and proclaimant, besides having been approved and fostered by our Holy Church, and besides having been inculcated and taught by our Blessed Lady, has God Himself for its first author and true founder.

Yes; we cannot doubt it. It was God Himself, who, by decreeing from all eternity, and bringing to pass in time, the lives of Jesus and Mary, traced the first outline and plan of this wondrous garden; it is the Holy Ghost who has planted it in the bosom of the Church, by inspiring saints with so pious a devotion, and by approving it and confirming it through His Church; moving faithful hearts to embrace it with fervent enthusiasm; and spreading it throughout the whole of the Catholic world. Everything great and holy

in the Church has taken a part in the propagation and spread of the holy Rosary. It is thus a devotion of real value, a practice worthy of all recommendation.

CHAPTER III

The Mystical Rose the Crown and Honour of all Roses

A flower shall rise up out of the root of Jesse.—
Isaias xi, 1.

THE rose is said to be the queen of the flowers. We may say something similar of the Rosary. The Rosary is among devotions what the rose is among flowers.

The chief point of the holy Rosary is the intimate and inseparable union of two kinds of prayer: mental prayer and vocal; for while our lips are occupied in reciting Hail Marys, the mind is engaged in thinking of the different mysteries and in dwelling on them.

While reciting the Rosary, in the first place, we make use of certain vocal

prayers. When we come to consider a little, we shall find that among all vocal prayers there are none so ancient, so estimable, so beautiful as those that compose the Rosary.

These prayers are: the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary", the "I believe," and the "Glory be to the Father"; prayers composed by our LORD, by His Apostles, and by the Church. They are prayers that have been murmured on the lips of angels, nay, even on those of the Eternal Truth Himself. Can we, then, find vocal prayers more perfect, more beautiful than these? The "Our Father" is the prayer that JESUS Himself taught His Apostles when they said, "LORD, teach us to pray."* The "Hail Mary" was addressed to our Lady by the Angel Gabriel to announce the message of the Incarnation; then St Elizabeth, inspired by the HOLY GHOST,

*Matt. vi, 9–13; Luke xi, 1–4.

continued the words of the angel; while our holy Mother the Church has added the concluding part. The "Credo" was composed by the twelve Apostles after the coming of the HOLY SPIRIT. The composer of the "Gloria Patri" is unknown, but the prayer is without doubt of great antiquity.

So you see, when you recite the Rosary, you offer praise to Mary by singing in her honour the hymn of jubilee that is chanted both in heaven and on earth, a hymn that will be sung by angels and men, and by all generations to the end of time. All have saluted and blessed Mary with these very same prayers; and you in repeating them renew the praises of angels and of men, offering this united homage as a tribute to the Mother of GOD.

Yet, although the vocal prayers of the Rosary are so beautiful, they do not form

the chief beauty of our Lady's crown of roses. For the principal part of the Rosary is the mysteries which compose it. These are the true roses of the chaplet; the vocal prayers being, so to say, the green leaves and foliage that adorn the roses. Each mystery is a precious jewel, a gem of priceless value, of beauty unexcelled, being the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Eternal Wisdom. Moreover, if you examine a little, you will see that of all the mysteries of the life of our Saviour those that have been chosen for the Rosary are the most beautiful and attractive. Tell me, when does our loving Saviour appear more endearing, more lovable in our eyes than when we see Him as a little babe, with baby cheeks of rosy red, weak and helpless, surrounded by an atmosphere of love; or when nailed to the altar of the cross, He offers Himself for us as the Lamb of Sacrifice; or

when risen from the dead He shows Himself in all His infinite glory and splendour as the LORD of infinite majesty?

Are not these the very scenes that Christian art delights to produce in preference to all others? What other scenes tend to stir our hearts so much? And these are precisely the mysteries we contemplate in the holy Rosary.

You can see at a glance that some mysteries are full of peacefulness and sweetness, others move us to sorrow and to tears, while others again fill our hearts with a lively joy. Thus, the mysteries form a graduated scale, marking the changing feelings of the soul, whereby to our great advantage we offer up to GOD the different affections of our heart, accompanying them with the sweet harmonies of prayer. Thus the Rosary proves to us a faithful companion and

affectionate friend who suits his moods to the varied feelings of our heart, and in whom we shall find a responsive echo to all our sorrows and joys.

But there is another reason which increases the attractions of the Rosary and renders it more worthy of our honour: it is that these mysteries have an intimate relation with the Blessed Virgin, being scenes taken from her life on earth; and thus they render it a devotion especially suited to our Lady.

By virtue of this intimate union of JESUS and Mary which we see throughout the Rosary our SAVIOUR is drawn closer to us, and presents Himself to us in the more accessible light of His human nature. We there see Him ever by the side of His holy Mother; true Man, with all the qualities and conditions of man; with a home on earth, with a natural love, and, far above all, with a

Mother whom He loves and respects, whom He always accompanies; a Mother who bore Him, clothed and nourished Him; from whom He, the Infinite Wisdom, learned the lessons of His childhood, and to whom He had recourse for everything. How lovable, how human does not our SAVIOUR appear in the Rosary, where we see Him exactly as He appears in the holy Gospel?

Not only does the Rosary present our LORD to us in the nearness of His human nature, but it also shows forth His most attractive attributes and wonderful majesty. In the Rosary we see our SAVIOUR always at Mary's side, we see Him in Mary and through Mary; we gaze on Him as Mary did; we contemplate His goodness with something of Mary's love. When we wish to contemplate the magnificent splendour of the sun, we turn away our poor weak eyes which cannot support

so brilliant a glare, and let them rest instead on the flowers, the clouds or the rainbow. And although we know well these objects are not the sun itself, still they are a reflection of the sun, they glisten with the light of the solar rays and so share, somewhat, in its splendour; and thus by their means we are enabled to form an approximate idea of the magnificence of the sun itself.

So it is, in a similar way, with our Saviour. He is truly man; but at the same time He is equally truly God; and as Man-God He is the Sun of Justice, resplendent, glorious. Our weak eyes are unable to support the glorious brilliancy of this great Sun; and in order to contemplate it we need an image which reflects its beauty, an image as perfect, as faithful a representative as possible.

Thus, in order to contemplate the mysteries of the life of our Redeemer, it is

highly necessary that we should form a vivid picture of them in our minds, by placing ourselves in spirit in the times and amid those places where those scenes took place; we should represent them to ourselves as if we saw them actually happening before our eyes. Doubtless the fruit of our meditation on these mysteries would have been far greater had we been present with the shepherds at Bethlehem, or joined the company of the Magi in their adoration of our King; or had we stood with St John at the foot of the cross, or rejoiced with Magdalene in the garden at the sight of our SAVIOUR risen from the dead. As it is, the best we can do is to enter into the feelings of these holy saints, modelling our affections after their example. For who had a part in the mysteries of the life of our Redeemer greater than that of the Blessed Virgin, His inseparable companion? Who felt His sufferings more vi-

vidly, more deeply than she? All the devotion, all the compassion, all the love of those saints who had the happiness to be present at any of these mysteries, what is it when compared to the devotion, compassion and love of the motherly heart of Mary; the devotion she felt when watching over the cradle of her only Son in the silence of that first Christmas night; the compassion that stirred the depths of her heart, pierced with the sword of sorrow, while following in the red-tracked footsteps of her Son and SAVIOUR; or the love with which her joyful soul overflowed when she rested her head on the bosom of that well-beloved Son, after His triumph over death?

What heart other than the immaculate heart of Mary could contain in its immensity so boundless a sea of virtues, sorrows and delights, such as we find in these heavenly mysteries? Oh! we ought to de-

light to search out and examine the tender feelings of that virginal heart, feelings which are but an echo, a reflection of the feelings and sentiments of the divine Heart of JESUS! How can we contemplate our SAVIOUR better than in Mary? There we see Him reflected in His creature, the most holy and perfect work that ever came from the hands of GOD; Mary, whom GOD created to reflect, like a faithful mirror, the beauty of the Sacred Heart. In the Rosary, then, we contemplate our Redeemer with Mary, in Mary and through Mary; we study Mary's feelings and sentiments, while she took part in these mysteries; we examine the virtues that she practised, in order to model our conduct, our emotions on hers. Could there be found a better, a more enchanting, a more sublime manner of meditating on the life of JESUS?

If we seriously consider all this, we

shall certainly stir up in our hearts the profound conviction that the Rosary is a really beautiful devotion, a pearl among devotions, the queen of all devotions. Holy Mother Church, by exhausting the treasury of her prayers, has united in the Rosary all her riches, all her treasures.

The Rosary is truly a mystical rose. You have noticed in the rose how the many petals spring from a common centre, around which they are ranged in the form of a beautiful crown. So with the Rosary; the grand mysteries of the life of our loving SAVIOUR range themselves, like petals, round their golden centre, Mary, and form around her a rich and priceless ornament.

JESUS and Mary are the mystical roses around which, when we recite the holy Rosary, the soul flutters, like a butterfly, and whence we draw the sweetness of contemplation and prayer.

CHAPTER IV

A Rich Mine

The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains.—*Ps.* lxxxvi, 1.

THE Rosary is the most beautiful of all devotions, as the rose is the most beautiful of flowers. Still between the Rosary and the Queen of flowers there is a marked difference, namely this, that although the rose is so lovely a flower, it produces no fruit; whereas the Rosary is productive of the richest and most enjoyable fruits, and is for us a fount of innumerable advantages and profits. In this chapter we shall see the reason for the great power and efficacy of the Rosary, and how it is all that we can expect.

There is a threefold reason for the marvellous power and efficacy of the holy Rosary.

First, because the Rosary is a prayer, a beautiful method of prayer; and prayer is of wonderful efficacy. "Therefore, I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask when you pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you."* Such is our divine SAVIOUR'S promise; and this promise shows clearly the power of prayer. For what is there that we cannot obtain by means of prayer? Prayer is the key that opens the divine treasury; it is the shield of protection and defence; it is the dextrous and powerful hand that clothes and feeds us, and by means of which we procure all that is profitable to us for time and eternity. Prayer gives us in a certain way a mastery over GOD Himself, by which we may command Him; and this because He so wishes it. Prayer is an indispensable means to arrive at sanctity; it is the source and foun-

*Mark xi, 24

tain of all the gifts and graces showered upon mankind. In a word, we can obtain *all* things with prayer; without prayer we can do nothing.

Moreover, while the Rosary has all the power of prayer, it possesses that force in an especial and extraordinary manner; and this because it embraces the different methods of prayer.

There are various ways of praying. First, prayer may be vocal or mental. In vocal prayer we devoutly give utterance to, or repeat, a fixed form of words; in mental prayer we unite to the exterior petition a continual and intense exercise of the powers of the soul, by thinking of and dwelling on the truths of faith, and by moving the will to various affections and sentiments. The first method of prayer is a good one, the second is better and more efficacious; but the best of all is that which unites the two, and this we employ

in the holy Rosary. Thus you will see that the Rosary is a prayer particularly suited to man's nature, since in reciting it we exercise our powers of mind and will, powers belonging essentially to man. It is a prayer by which the whole man, body and soul, interior and exterior, is exercised in the service and praise of God.

There is also private prayer and public prayer or prayer in common. The Rosary may be used for one or the other. Every one can recite it alone in the privacy of his own room; it can be made a family prayer, the prayer of a community, the prayer of a nation; all thus joining together to offer violence to the kingdom of heaven, in order the more surely to move the Sacred Heart to grant the petitions made.

When we come to examine the qualities prayer should have in order to be efficacious with God, and find favour be-

fore Him, we find that the Rosary includes them all.

First, prayer must be founded on faith. Now, we have already seen that the Rosary is not only founded on faith, but it is the true prayer of faith. Does it not proceed immediately from the profession of our faith? Is it not the flower of faith? In reciting it, do we not exercise our faith by meditating on the mysteries of faith? All that we petition for in the Rosary, we ask for through the merits of the life and passion of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Surely this is asking, praying "in the name of JESUS."

Prayer must also be constant and persevering. The recitation of the Rosary takes a considerable amount of time; and how repeatedly do we not press, almost to weariness, our petitions for those things most necessary for us. This is because persevering prayer is always specially blessed. Our SAVIOUR Himself gave us a secure

pledge of this in the parable relating how a man went at midnight to his friend's house to beg three loaves. We may be sure that the man in the parable did not cry out and entreat as often as we cry out and entreat in one Rosary. Yet if the door was opened to him and his request granted, will it not also be opened to us? Shall not our prayer also be heard?

Another of the necessary qualities of prayer is that it should be humble. Now the Rosary is a simple and humble prayer, so much so that those men who are deemed by the world talented and great are inclined to despise those whom they see with rosaries in their hands. The Rosary is the prayer of the people, the devotion of the "poor in CHRIST," who not being talented and distinguished, know no better prayer than to repeat unwearyingly the words they have learnt from GOD and from His holy Church.

This quality of humility gives the Rosary great power before GOD. The Publican in the Gospel knew little of the high-flown language of the vain Pharisee, but was content to repeat a simple, humble prayer. Truly, the Publican went home justified because of his humility, but not so the Pharisee.

Lastly, our prayer should always be confident. Now, the very thought that the Rosary is a prayer which relies on the merits of JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOUR, which merits we devoutly present one by one before the throne of GOD, by meditating on the mysteries of the life, passion and death of our Redeemer, this thought, I say, ought to fill our souls with an absolute and perfect confidence. This confidence with which the Rosary inspires us arises from the following considerations:

The Rosary is one of the grand devo-

tions of the Church. These grand devotions which, from time to time, spring up in the bosom of the Church are the manifestations of Christian piety with which the Church regards things or persons intimately connected with the spread of faith. The author of these great devotions is, in every case, the Holy Ghost, who rules and guides His Church, and who is continually drawing forth from the rich treasures of religion new means whereby to promote, at all times, the increase of piety and good morals. These devotions must be recognized by the Church and have her approval; they must be taken up and practised by a large part of the Christian world. Now we have seen that all these characteristics of the greater devotions of the Church are to be found in the holy Rosary. The Church has not only recognized it and approved of it, but has also established it as one of her forms of

public prayer, an approbation such as very few other devotions possess. You have already learnt the origin of the Rosary; and daily experience gives ample proof that there is no other devotion so universally and constantly practised by the Catholic world. Surely all these excellent qualities of the Rosary should give us great confidence in its practice, and teach us to prefer it to all other means of prayer. When you recite the Rosary, you pray not in your own name only, but in the name of the Church. Your words are her words; nay more, they are the words of the Holy Ghost. We may be certain that, while we recite the Rosary, thousands and thousands of Catholics, our brothers and sisters, are reciting it daily with us in exactly the same manner. The Rosary is, *par excellence*, the devotion of the Church; the devotion of her children and of her saints. Outside of the Psalter,

the Breviary and the holy Mass, there is no devotion so long reverenced, so universally used to show our love for God, to honour His holy Mother, and to express our wants and needs. It is truly a universal devotion, one of the best means of communicating between heaven and earth; it is the ladder of gold whereby our prayers ascend to God, and down which descend to us the mercy and grace of God, our Father.

The holy Rosary has yet another advantage over all other devotions, namely, that it is in nowise a hindrance to the practice of any other of the devotions in honour of our Lord and of His blessed Mother; but, on the contrary, it contains and includes them all, in that it embraces within itself all the principal mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary. Thus all other devotions find full expression in the holy chaplet of our Lady.

Moreover, the Rosary is a devotion to the Blessed Virgin; it is one of the many ways we have of honouring the Mother of God. It is to her chiefly that we direct our prayer, and she with her divine Son is the aim and object of our love and veneration. And this is yet another source of power and efficacy. We Catholics know well from the teaching of the Church, and from experience, how powerful and efficacious is the honour and invocation of the saints, but, above all, the cult and devotion to our Lady. We know well the special efficacy of those prayers which we direct to her, and which she presents for us before the throne of God. She is truly the blessed Mother of our Lord and God; but, at the same time, she is also truly our mother. We know well that she is "full of grace," and that, with Christ, she brought to us the fullness of grace. She thus takes part, in a special manner, in

the distribution of grace, so much so that no one, after CHRIST our LORD, has so great a share as she in the distribution and communication of grace to all men and to each single individual. Thus we are deeply influenced and inclined to have recourse to her always, choosing her as our mediatrix, our advocate in all our needs. Why is prayer addressed to our Lady so speedily answered? First, because in having recourse to Mary we perform an act of humility. We consider ourselves too unworthy for our prayers to be heard by our LORD Himself, and we feel the want of some one to intercede for us and to recommend our petitions. And who can undertake to intercede for us better than Mary; who could be a better advocate than the Mother of our SAVIOUR and our mother also? Our Redeemer views this act of humility with kindly eyes, and by it we the better dis-

pose our hearts in order that our prayer may be granted.

Secondly, since our SAVIOUR is absolute Lord and Master of all His graces, with Him remains the choice to determine the means by which they are to be obtained. It rests with His will to fix the way we must follow in order that we may attain those graces; this being so, it is our duty to make use always of this means, to follow always in the way that He has chosen.

These, then, are the reasons that make the Rosary so efficacious a prayer. Truly the foundations thereof are on the holy mountain. Under the soil of this delightful garden are three rich and valuable mines, full of the precious metals of spiritual riches. They are the mine of prayer, the mine of Catholic devotion, the mine of devotion to Mary. All three are of ancient origin; all three are

approved of and blessed. Never have the workers of these mines left off toiling, through fatigue or disappointment. All the riches and wealth of these three mines can be dug up in the garden of our Lady, the holy Rosary; and all true servants of our Queen enjoy these riches in happiness and contentment. Join the number of these holy miners! Work and labour in the service of the Queen of the most holy Rosary! She is more worthy of our love, more powerful than the enchantress of the mountains of whom the poets sing, that witch who formed precious stones in the bowels of the mountains and showered gold dust for men in the beds of rivers. Mary, for her part, bountifully showers upon her clients and devoted servants the richest pearls of grace; and if you serve her well, you will very soon be rich. Test and prove it for yourself.

CHAPTER V

The Sword of Goliath

There is no sword like to it. Give it me.
—1 *Kings* xxi, 9.

HAVING examined the reason for the great power and efficacy of the holy Rosary, you will be impatient to learn something about the fruits of which the Rosary has so great a store.

These fruits are many; and for clearness' sake we will place them in three classes: those that belong to the Church, those which concern the salvation of individuals, and, lastly, those which refer to our Blessed Lady.

All Christendom owes to the Rosary, in great part, not only the progress of faith, but also its preservation. Through

its means God has again and again delivered the Church from the hands of her enemies, both from those within her fold and from those without. What were these enemies? Exteriorly, the power of infidels; within, heresy and the corruption of morals. Against them all the Church has triumphantly defended herself with the Rosary as her shield. For centuries the greatest and most dreaded enemy of the Christian faith was Mohammedanism. East and west and south, it pressed Christianity by means of its maritime power, and held all Christians as it were between the horns of its crescent. Christian nations, divided and distracted by schism and heresy, had fallen to be the prize and booty of these powerful infidels. Whence came the remedy for this great distress? From our Lady and the Rosary. The Turks had prepared a powerful squadron and were threatening

to invade Italy. The Christian fleet sailed out and met them at Lepanto; and despite their inferiority in numbers and their unfavourable position they gained a complete and signal victory over the Turks. While the fight raged at Lepanto, all Christendom, and chiefly the Confraternity of the Rosary, made use of this powerful weapon, this chaplet of our Lady; and to its efficacy Pope Pius V attributed so signal a victory, for he himself had seen a vision of the fight, and announced the happy result of it even before any news had arrived. This was in the year 1571.

Later on the Emperor Charles VI won another signal victory over the Turks, in Hungary, in the year 1716; and at last the Mohammedans were obliged to raise the siege of Corfu, and to withdraw in ignominy and shame. These victories destroyed for ever the power of the

Turks, a power they have never been able to win back since. In order to perpetuate the remembrance of this wonderful succour, Popes Gregory XIII, Clement X and Clement XI instituted the feast of the Most Holy Rosary, to be observed by the universal Church. We may truly say, then, that the Rosary completely destroyed the great power of the Turks and saved the Christian Church.

Again, the Rosary continues, even in our own days, to prove itself an invincible power against all the enemies of the Church. Turn your eyes towards Rome, to the Vatican. What do you behold there? There is the Pope: alone, for all have abandoned him, and played the traitor: for years and years his enemies have not ceased in their endeavour to undermine his power and weaken his strength; one after the other they have stolen from him his temporal dominions; the spirit of rebel-

lion has stood now for a long time at his gates, raging and fuming, foaming at the mouth with passion and anger, and will not rest satisfied till it sees the Holy Roman See dashed in pieces to the ground. Fear not; for this will never come to pass. The Pope remains unshaken, fearless, boldly defying the raging passion of his enemies. Is not this a wonder, a marvellous thing? After GOD, to what do we owe this admirable preservation and protection? For answer let us listen to the words of the Pope himself.

During a private audience, some one presented to Pius IX a number of rosaries to be blessed by him; he thereupon took out his own little beads, and holding them up before all those that were present, he said, "I also have rosary beads; this is my invincible power, the shield of the Vatican; they are the same beads that my predecessor, Pius the Martyr, used;

the very beads that protected him against all his enemies. What he did I also do; and I hope to triumph with the same weapon and defence." He continued, "Give me an army of men of prayer, and with it I will overcome all my foes." These words of the grand old Pontiff are well known; and his words came to pass, as we can see to-day.

Our Holy Father, the late Pope Leo XIII, who ruled so long and happily over the destiny of the Church, has again and again recommended the recitation of the holy Rosary; he set apart and consecrated the month of October in honour of this devotion; he also added to the petitions of the Litany of Loreto the invocation, "Queen of the most holy Rosary, pray for us." Even our own times give ample testimony to the great power of the Rosary. It was not without a special signification that our Lady appeared at Lourdes

with the Rosary in her hands, and recommended the practice of this devotion. This is the glorious "Labarum," the standard of victory.

I mentioned a little farther back, that the struggle against heresy was the occasion of the institution of the Rosary, such as we say it now, and was the cause of its wonderful spread. The abominable heresy of the Albigenses, a sect who denied the divinity of our adorable SAVIOUR, and consequently robbed our Lady of the title and dignity of Mother of GOD, was most firmly established in the South of France, making great havoc there with fire and sword. Preaching proved useless against it; it was proof against arms. Then our Blessed Lady appeared to Saint Dominic, in the year 1206, and ordered him to preach the devotion of the holy Rosary.

The invincible force of this devotion soon began little by little to extirpate

this heresy, and to send back into the bosom of the Church those who had fallen away. This victory established the fame of the Rosary, made it perpetual in the history of the Catholic faith. So great a remedy does the Rosary prove against corruption of morals. The Blessed Virgin had expressly stated to Saint Dominic that the Rosary would prove a powerful defence against all heresy and perversion; and so, as the angelical salutation of "Hail, Mary!" had been the beginning of the salvation and redemption of the human race, so the Rosary, which contains the "Hail, Mary," as its chief element, would be the best means to procure the conversion of sinners, and a sure pledge of their salvation. Faith, prayer and grace: these three bring about man's conversion. All true reform should proceed from faith; and it is grace only, to be obtained by humble prayer, that can secure that reform and

crown it. Well, then, the Rosary, as we have seen, is beyond all doubt the prayer of faith; the mysteries which we contemplate in it, place before the eyes of our soul our SAVIOUR and His blessed Mother, the most perfect models of justice and holiness. Who can contemplate such holy examples without becoming a better Catholic? In a similar way we meet in the Rosary the fountain of all grace, and through the intercession of Mary we establish an intimate communication with that source of grace; and wherever this stream of grace pours its fresh, sweet waters, there all dryness and troublesome doubts disappear; the consequences of lukewarmness and sin are washed away; there springs up instead the fruitful seed of faith, which gives birth to virtue and to holiness. Look round upon the nations and people of the world, and you will see that where the Rosary is constantly recited, there faith

goes on increasing; there, the moral tone is purified; and wherever a nation is reforming itself in a Christian and Catholic manner, there the love for and devotion to the Rosary grows more and more. Take, for example, last century. At first the devotion of the Rosary was almost forgotten; it was known at best only through the mockeries of unbelievers, and to certain Catholics; and what was the state of faith and purity of morals of the people and clergy? But as soon as the true Catholic spirit began to revive, the devotion and practice of the Rosary increased at an equal pace; they always go hand in hand. It is hardly possible to conceive the number of graces, the torrents of blessings and favours that the Rosary has drawn down upon the Church. The number of conversions it has brought about are almost countless.

The Church speaks truly when, in the

office of the holy Rosary she says that "innumerable are the fruits this salutary devotion has obtained for Christendom." What, then, should not our love be for this devotion, seeing how much our holy mother the Church owes to its practice; and what confidence ought we not to have in it, seeing how much we can do with it! How efficacious the little Rosary has been in the interests of the Church! This is the strong battlement whence hang suspended thousands of shields to protect us; this is the tower of strength, the sword of Goliath. Yes, this is the blade chosen from among thousands, the true sword of Goliath, which all may wield, both soldier and priest, the layman and the Pope, nay, even the little ones can brandish it with ease. Satan and his companions have no power against it. They fear this simple weapon, and seek to snatch it from our hands, if not by force, at least by the

wicked influence of mockery and calumny.

From this we must conclude that if we desire to benefit mankind, to ask a blessing on the Church, all we need do is to say our Rosary. We must use it not only for our own private personal needs and necessities, but also to fight against the enemies of the Church and of mankind. The strength of the Rosary suffices against all our foes. With our little Rosary we can map out the course and incidents in the history of the world. We have seen how the Rosary has influenced the fortunes of the Church in modern times. There is no need to repeat it again. Whenever any great interest is at stake, be it in important elections to office, important decisions in State affairs, the making of laws, projects of peace or war between Christian peoples, let us always and in every case hasten to make use of

the Rosary. Each Rosary that we recite with devotion is an auxiliary force for the cause of God and the Church. With it we can decide elections, make laws, bring wars to a good ending, have safety in time of danger, govern the world, and even take part in the counsels of the most Holy Trinity. By means of the Rosary all fierce attacks against the Church are terminated, all troubles disappear. In combating the Rosary, our enemies meet a sure defeat, ruin and disaster. When we have our Rosary in our hands, we have all that we can desire, and need have no fear.

CHAPTER VI

The School of Enchantment

Come, children, hearken to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.—*Psalm* xxxiii, 11.

AFTER having seen the immense advantages that accrue to the Church from the Rosary, we are now going to point out those which each individual may expect to obtain.

In the Rosary we have all that is necessary for the preservation and strengthening of the life of the soul.

The life and salvation of the soul consists in avoiding sin, resisting all evil inclinations and in practising the virtues and good works proper to our state of life. We can do all this by means of the Rosary, and that, too, in a most agreeable and

pleasing way by placing before our eyes the example of our Saviour and of the Blessed Virgin, thus calling down upon ourselves their graces and protection. It is absolutely necessary that we should not spend all our life in dissipation and constant contact with the things of the world; but we should endeavour to recollect ourselves every day for a short time that we may turn our thoughts within ourselves; in a word, we must pray. Neglect of prayer, levity of mind, giving ourselves over entirely to the things of this world, these are the sad causes of so much evil in our soul. The great aim of the spiritual life is to acquire a love of prayer and recollection, and to be constant in these practices. The Rosary combines these advantages and profits. In it we have something to fix on every day, something determined, not too little and not too much; something in the same way as the priest

has to recite the Canonical Hours: this is the reason why the Rosary came to be called the "Office of laymen."

This daily entering into oneself is a source of all good; it is the path to eternal salvation. Saint Augustine says: "He who knows how to pray well, knows how to live virtuously." Unless we love prayer we cannot feel secure about our salvation; we can do nothing well; we possess neither a firm conscience, nor grace; no defence, no firmness. But all that we need we have in the Rosary, since that is an agreeable and enchanting manner of conversing with Jesus and Mary. Thus we come to know them perfectly; we walk with them; we speak to them; their beautiful life, full of all virtues and graces, presents itself to us in all its loveliness, and influences our own. How can any Christian approach daily to the Blessed Virgin, and look on her in contemplation, see her piety, her

modesty, her purity, her activity, her patience, her resignation, and not become little by little like unto her; abandoning his former bad habits and the frivolities of worldly attractions, his pomp, his vanity, his sensuality, his whims, his anger and evil tendencies? I know of no better remedy for all these defects of our human nature than the daily recitation of the Rosary at the feet of our Lady. This practice will enlighten, inflame and invigorate our souls with true spiritual life, better even than the sun invigorates and animates the primrose; better than its heat melts frost and ice and effaces every sign of winter, bringing to life beautiful and verdant vegetation.

Devote your attention, for a little while, to the mysteries which compose the Rosary. Have they not been chosen and selected with true diligence and care? We do not behold in them our LORD preaching

and working miracles, because these things are not necessary for the ordinary Christian life. But we see Him as a Child working by the side of His Mother; obeying her; praying often. Next, we see Him take up His cross for love of us; we see Him suffer and die for us; and, lastly, we see Him in His resurrection, wherein He shows to us the splendour of His glorified Body, a splendour which we may hope for if we follow Him and His blessed Mother in all humility and prayer, bearing our toils and sufferings patiently for His sake. Here we have the states of life through which we must all pass on our way to eternity. These, then, are the most useful and practical of all the mysteries of the life of Jesus and Mary. In them we find all that is necessary for our instruction and progress.

Nay, more, with the lessons that we learn therefrom, we receive also grace and

strength to enable us to practise all that we have learnt, and this abundance of grace is another of the precious fruits of the holy Rosary. While we kneel down before our loving Mother, who is also the Mother of grace, while we contemplate her and speak to her, she, on her part, looks down with love on us. If she wishes it, what can she not do for us! Yet, you must not imagine that all you have to do is to pray and leave all the rest to our Lady. By no means. You must endeavour to lead a better life; to overcome yourself and do good works. You cannot do it of yourself; you need the help of God's grace, and this grace you can obtain through prayer by means of the Rosary. This is why our conversation with Jesus and Mary by prayer is so necessary, for it is the indispensable means of obtaining the graces and help we need, and by it we receive graces in abundance. Test it, and

you will see that by means of the Rosary you will be enabled to overcome your passions and evil inclinations. There is no sacrifice, no cross that the Rosary will not enable you to bear. Supported by the hand of the Blessed Virgin, you will triumph in safety over all dangers and difficulties; and even when you leave our Lady's side at the finish of your prayer, she will follow you and accompany you as your protectress and defence. When you are no longer by her side, she will not cease to be with you, but will guide you with a mother's love. Be, then, a devout and faithful reciter of the most holy Rosary.

How many young people there are who having learnt nothing else—either in their father's house, or at the school where they were taught—beyond the good practice of reciting the Rosary daily, have preserved themselves in all purity and virtue; or if by misfortune they strayed, how

quickly they returned to the right path. I have no fear for the safety of any young person who devoutly loves our Lady with his whole heart; the world and the devil cannot hold possession of him long. For one that is in Mary's keeping is never lost, but will rather increase in virtue and sanctity.

In the Rosary the Blessed Virgin undertakes the duty of a mother, to purify and elevate our hearts; for she is truly our Mother. What a favour! In the life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary we read that the Blessed Virgin desired to be her mistress in the spiritual life, and that she received her into her school of virtue with all due formality, and faithfully instructed her. What condescension! In the Rosary this same school is opened to you. What is there that we cannot learn in it? Surely you still remember the pleasant school at which you and I and all of us attended.

What grand things did we not learn there! We learnt to think, to speak, to know our God, and to commit ourselves to His protection. In a word, there we learnt to be Christians and true Catholics, and all this with so little trouble, so little pain. There was our loving mother full of love and devotion, who took us in her arms and lovingly bent down to us, bringing herself to our level, and with her tender looks and enchanting conversation, little by little awoke our sleeping intelligence, loosening our lisping tongue, talking familiarly with us, explaining everything with childish prattle, clasping us to her breast, and making us good children of God like herself. Have you guessed what school this is? It is the school where we all have been in our mother's lap. It is a school of the highest importance, a school full of attractiveness, to which we owe our being what we are now.

Well, then, in the spiritual life the Rosary is just such another school as that. We place ourselves at the feet of our Lady, and she does to us just what our earthly mother used to do. She educates and trains us; she makes us like to herself and like to her divine Son, the model of all the children of the Mother of God. This school is open for us all day long, and every day; hasten to attend there, and be a diligent and attentive pupil.

How we envy the good fortune of the early Christians, who had the happiness of seeing the Mother of God, of knowing her, of speaking to her! How frequently they went to kneel at her feet, that they might hear from her loving lips all that she related of our loving Saviour! Those were happy hours, hours of sweetness and of peace. How happy should I be to hear from the lips of this most perfect of creatures, this incomparable

Mother, the story of the life and actions of the Redeemer, of which the minutest details and circumstances were faithfully remembered and graven deeply in her soul! How happy should I be to hear her sweet voice telling the recollections of her joys and her sorrows! What must have been the attention of those happy Christians when they listened to her sweet words? What lessons of love and devotion to our SAVIOUR must they not have learnt! Can you doubt for an instant that these happy scenes took place? Read the first chapters of the Gospel of St Luke, in which he speaks of the infancy and childhood of our LORD. Such a faithful and charming recital could only owe its origin to such scenes as I have mentioned.

Well, then, the Rosary presents you with a method for holding similar intercourse with the Blessed Virgin. In it you

can draw near to Mary, for although she is far from us in distance, yet not so in spirit and grace. You will never be alone, never the only one present in this school of enchanting scenes; you will always have many companions. All those who really love JESUS and Mary delight to attend there. There they learn to be grand Catholics and holy children of the Mother of GOD.

CHAPTER VII

The Glory of the Mother of God

Thy praise shall not depart out of the mouth of men.—*Judith* xiii, 25.

THE effects of the Rosary are not confined or limited to this world; many of them rise even unto heaven, unto the throne of the Mother of God, to honour and glorify her as is her due. For the Garden of the Rosary produces fruits for Mary also. What sort of fruits are these? They are of three kinds—of honour, of gratitude, of praise. This is the part of the Rosary that affects Mary.

The Rosary is indeed a crown of glory for our loving Mother. All that is great and beautiful in Mary is meditated on in

the mysteries of the Rosary. The greatness of the Blessed Virgin is founded chiefly on her holiness and virtues. These virtues we consider in reciting the Rosary. Do we not address her continually during it with the angel's salutation, "Full of grace"? Do we not repeatedly call her "Holy Mary"? The Rosary is like a grand exhibition, wherein are shown the pictures and representations of her virtues and her sanctity, all lighted up by the devotion and piety of the faithful. What is the Rosary but an act of tribute to the virtues of Mary?

Moreover, the greatness of the Blessed Virgin is due to her sovereign dignity of Mother of God, a dignity in which she is unique, unparalleled; for since there is but one Man-God, so there is but one Mother of God. Her divine motherhood is the essential characteristic which distinguishes her from all other creatures.

When we say the Rosary, we recognize this dignity of Mary as Mother of GOD, in an especial manner. The very mysteries which have been selected to compose the Rosary, are those in which Mary appears as a mother at the side of her SAVIOUR, and appears to us in all her power and glory and dignity, true Mother of the only-begotten Son of GOD.

The Gospel shows us Mary only as Mother of GOD; the Rosary likewise presents her to our eyes as always exercising and practising her office of a mother. She gives life and being to our SAVIOUR, she nurses Him and teaches Him; through her means He is communicated to us with His divine grace; she offers Him, first, in the Temple at Jerusalem, and afterwards on Calvary, as if He longed and desired to be offered up by no other hands than those of His Mother; just as He now desires to reign in His glory,

having at His right hand that queen of love and mercy.

Then the Rosary is the most sublime and beautiful hymn that we can sing to honour and praise the divine motherhood of Mary. JESUS, our SAVIOUR, shares in the glory of this hymn, as being the true and only Son of Mary; and He teaches us a lesson of love by the respect and veneration He pays to His Mother. Oh, we can never pay our Lady one half the honour and devotion that JESUS does; no, nor can the whole Church with all her persevering love of Mary! We thus pay Mary, in the Rosary, the worship of hyperdulia, due to her as Mother of GOD; and we find in the recital of it all the foundations of that worship, and the best means of practising that veneration.

Again, the Rosary is an act of thanksgiving towards our Lady; for it brings before our mind the grandest titles of

Mary by which she lays claim to our gratitude. What would have become of us poor sinners without JESUS, without His teaching, without His example, His passion and death? Next after GOD, we owe all this to Mary. Had it not been for her, we should never have had JESUS. She is the bridge of gold whereby JESUS came to us. GOD left her full freedom in the act of incarnation; heaven and earth hung upon her lips, awaiting in awe the answer of the maid of Nazareth; through love of GOD and for us, she gave her free consent; for love of us she offered her Son as a sacrifice for our redemption.

Seeing then, how vividly the Rosary teaches us all this, it is impossible that the remembrance of it should ever depart from our hearts; we can never forget our indebtedness to Mary, as long as the devotion of the Rosary is kept up by the Church; for it is the best means we have

of expressing our gratitude to her. Because the best way by which we can show our thankfulness towards a benefactor is to have him constantly before our mind, to endeavour to please him always, and to seek what will be most to his advantage. So, when we recite the Rosary, we recall to mind all the benefits we own to Mary, we thank her for them with all our heart, and we try to imitate all the virtues we see in her. By it we endeavour to obtain all the graces promised by the mysteries it contains; as the Church says in the Office for the feast of the most holy Rosary: "Grant us, O LORD, the grace to imitate what these mysteries contain, and to obtain what they promise; through CHRIST our LORD."

This surely is a source of great joy to the Blessed Virgin. In the Rosary we rejoice in the contemplation of all Mary's virtues, gifts and prerogatives; and we

give thanks to God for having showered so many blessings on her. To this end we constantly repeat, "Glory be to the Father," etc.; and our most suitable thanksgiving is to rejoice in the happiness and goodness of the benefactor, and thus to give thanks to God.

Finally, the Rosary is a source of great joy to the Blessed Virgin. Praise and honour is the only thing we can give to Mary. We have seen that the Rosary teaches us what a great share Mary took in the mystery of our redemption. Moreover, we know how little love and honour Mary received from men, whilst she took part here below in the realization of these mysteries; few cared to hear her spoken of, few paid the debt of gratitude they owed. The places through which she passed with her divine Son had nothing to offer her but thorns and thistles, insults and humiliations. To-day the Holy

Land is in the power of the infidels, and but few Christians can visit the holy places to render there their tribute of gratitude and praise. Would that these holy places, where all Mary's life was passed, produced in her honour roses of praise and love! In the spiritual sense, this is what we try to do in the Rosary every day; in company with thousands and thousands of our fellow-Catholics we make a spiritual pilgrimage to that dear land, and one by one we pass through all the scenes where the Blessed Virgin worked and suffered for us. By dint of these repeated pilgrimages those dry and desert places begin to grow green again and to be covered with the most beautiful flowers of blessing and praise in honour of our Lady.

Would you not like to have accompanied Mary in her journeyings from Nazareth to Bethlehem, from Bethle-

hem to Egypt, from Jerusalem to Calvary? This you can do by suffering meekly and patiently with Mary and her Son all your trials, humiliations and sufferings. You can do so when you recite the Rosary: then you can accompany her in spirit and bring her consolation; she will accept your company and consolation as if you had offered it during her life on earth.

Thus our best motive, the very best we can have, for saying the Rosary is to honour thereby our Blessed Lady, to pay her all due homage and respect. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the intention of deriving from it a spiritual advantage. The motive of love and disinterestedness is noble and sublime, and gives great honour and joy to the pure heart of the Mother of God. This is the beautiful aroma you must extract from your roses: in this way you will please our mother Mary and contribute to her glory.

The Rosary places Mary in the bosom of Christianity as a great queen of glory and love, who increases more and more in beauty and grace with each Rosary that we recite. Through the Rosary Mary enters into the heart and life of the Church, verifying the words of Holy Writ: "I was established in Sion, and in the holy city, . . . and I took root in an honourable people, . . . and my abode is in the full assembly of the saints."* Are you not full of zeal, full of filial ardour to contribute, at least a little, to the greater glory of this great queen?

* Ecclesiasticus xxiv, 15, 16.

CHAPTER VIII

"*There is no Rose but hath its Thorn*"

Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines.—*Canticle of Canticles* ii, 15.

UP to this we have spoken at length about the fruits of the chaplet of our Lady, and they are numerous and beautiful. But to obtain them in all their beauty and luxuriance we must be careful with them and attentive, a duty which is not always very easy.

There are some who, because they do not know *how* to recite the Rosary properly, find no pleasure in saying it, neither do they derive from it any profit, and they finally end by giving it up altogether. So, for this reason, I will say a few words about the method of reciting the Rosary well; and this will prove a fresh motive

to induce you to recite it often and slowly, especially when you find out how easily you can practise this devotion with great fruit and profit to yourself.

What must we do in order to say the Rosary well? First, we must make up our minds to recite it devoutly. When do we recite it devoutly? Simply when we do, for our part, all that we can, all that depends on our will. What, then, depends on our will, and what does not?

In the first place, sentiment or feeling does not depend on the will in the recitation of the Rosary, nor during any kind of prayer has the will anything to do with pious, tender and other emotions. Neither do new and beautiful thoughts, such as move us to joy or sorrow, depend upon our will. There are some people who think that prayer is of no use unless we feel some of these emotions; but this is a great mistake. Prayer can be perfect

without any of these tender feelings; nay, more, it can be perfect prayer even when we feel the opposite kind of sentiments, when we feel weary, tired, dry in spirit; even when it takes great efforts on our part to continue praying, and we feel even a sort of disgust for it. Such feelings of disgust do not necessarily make the prayer bad in itself. And why? Simply because such feelings do not depend on ourselves, on our will. Pious sentiments are in no wise necessary. God only can instil into our hearts these pious emotions, and He gives them at His own free choice. Of course such feelings are in no way to be despised, seeing that they come from God and are for our encouragement; because by their means we pray with greater ease and fervour, and because they point out for us some new feature of beauty in God, or in the spiritual life, that may prove of great use to us either now or hereafter.

If God grants us pious thoughts, let us accept them with due gratitude. If we tried to have them always, perhaps we should at last grow weary and lose all liking for prayer. All that we can do to acquire these emotions is to dispose our souls properly to receive them, and to remove all hindrances to them, doing all that is necessary on our part and settling on what we are going to say. Leave all the rest to the goodness of God, and don't worry about them, as if they formed the chief part of our prayer. It would be really childish, nay foolish even, to omit prayer because we did not experience pious feelings; and it would be a sign that in our prayers we did not seek the greater glory of God and the profit of our own soul, but simply our own delight and comfort.

In the second place, always remember that we have no control over distractions. Distractions which come and go, without

our being able to help it, do not make our prayer bad in itself; that is if they are not voluntary. We must distinguish two kinds of attention: constant and continued attention, which consists in the absence of all distraction; and the attention of the will, which consists in the desire to avoid distraction, and repelling it as much as possible. This latter kind of attention is quite sufficient to constitute good and profitable prayer. So that, however greatly you may be distracted during your prayers, if these distractions are not voluntary, your prayer is real prayer, and will always bring fruit to your soul. You will have done all that you ought, and your prayer will be heard; all that you lose is the tender feelings that you would have experienced if you had not been distracted.

These two things, pious sentiments and the total absence of distractions, do not depend on ourselves.

What, then, does depend on our will? The simple and peaceful continuation of our conversation with Mary, as far as circumstances allow of it; the simple meditation on the divine mysteries, in the same way as men are accustomed to speak and converse with one another about their business affairs. This is the rule for reciting the Rosary, a rule which applies to almost all prayer. For prayer is nothing else than speaking and conversing with God or with the saints, to thank them or to express our wants and needs. The more our prayer resembles the ordinary conversation of men, the better and simpler it will be, even although it may be artless, dry and without any extraordinary sensible feelings. When we recite the Rosary, let us speak to our Lady in all simplicity, tell her all that we feel in our hearts; this is all that is needed.

Now there are two means of avoiding

distractions, about which I should like to speak to you. They are both within your power. Above all, never begin the Rosary, or any other prayer, carelessly or without recollecting yourself beforehand. He who expects to be able to pass from thoughts on exterior things, on business, to speak with God, arouses distractions on the things of the world and prevents true prayer. Streams that flow over mud do not become clear or drinkable until they have rested a little while, and deposited the mud they have picked up.

In what does this recollection consist? It consists in not commencing to pray before we have made the Sign of the Cross, and asked ourselves the question, "What am I about to do? I am going to recite the Rosary in honour of the Blessed Virgin; I want to recite it well, as well as I can, in order that it may be acceptable in her eyes." When you have done this, then

commence. This short recollection is of great value; it is like getting a good footing in order that our prayer may proceed better, just as you would do if you were about to jump a ditch, and wanted to leap over it without falling in. This recollection, which we make at the beginning, should be kept up all during our prayer, in order that we may not forget what we are doing, and so fall into distractions. Likewise, at the commencement of each mystery we should ask ourselves, "Which mystery am I to consider now? The Annunciation. I will try and meditate on it as devoutly as I can. Holy Mary, help me."

Then try and fix on your imagination the scene where the mystery took place, such as you may have seen it represented in paintings or drawings; do this briefly, as if you were passing a simple glance over the picture that represents the scene; this done, begin the mystery.

During each mystery it would be well to make a slight pause. Having contemplated the mystery for two or three "Hail, Marys," stop a while, and speak to the Blessed Virgin about that which you are contemplating; say something simple, such as your heart prompts you at the time, as for example: "Oh, how beautiful, how holy, how amiable wert thou, most Blessed Lady! . . . Would that I were as humble, as pious as thou! Obtain for me these virtues from thy divine Son." I would strongly recommend you to do this frequently, to repeat these little acts of recollection. Never be in too great a hurry to finish. It is far better to recite one decade only, calmly and slowly, than to say a whole Rosary mechanically or too fast. It is very important to stop now and again, otherwise you will be inclined to say it too quickly. And if you find that you do not get on very well, but get dis-

tracted and inclined to slur over your prayers, examine yourself on this point, and you will soon find out where the fault lies.

It is also highly necessary that, while we are praying, we do not let our eyes wander about through curiosity. Choose, then, for the recitation of the Rosary a time of quiet, and a quiet place, that there may not be anything to distract or worry you; choose, for example, the church, your own room, any quiet part of the house, or even a secluded walk in a garden; only in this latter case do not begin staring at the flowers or birds, but keep your mind fixed on your prayers. So that, on the whole, the time, place, surroundings, our very posture, all have a great deal to do with our prayer. Our government of ourselves will keep us devout and recollected; it strengthens the soul, increases our attention, and God

often rewards it with tender consolation. God will deal with us as we deal with Him. If we present ourselves before Him in all humility and modesty, as is fitting, He will receive us as His friends, and have compassion on us. In our conversation with our fellow men, much notice is taken of the manner and conduct of the person with whom we talk; ought we not to be still more careful in our conversation with God? So I would advise you to recite your Rosary either kneeling down or walking about; but not sitting comfortably in a chair, unless weak health demands it. Our Blessed Lady once reproved Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque for reciting the Rosary while sitting down instead of kneeling.

This is all I have to say about the way we should recite the Rosary. If you observe these instructions, the black-beetles and caterpillars—in the form of distrac-

tions—will not come and destroy the beautiful roses, your "Hail, Marys." Keep these instructions always in mind; you will find it a little cross somewhat difficult for our weak nature to bear; but these are the thorns of the roses of the Rosary. This proves the saying that there is no rose but has its thorn. But the consolation that you will feel when you present our loving Mother with your crown of fresh, fragrant and perfect roses, will always more than compensate you for the little trials you had to bear in doing your duty. Lastly, the continual practice of saying the Rosary will soon become a strong habit, which will make its recitation ever so much easier.

CHAPTER IX

The Sanctuary of the Garden

She is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up. —*Cant. of Canticles* iv, 12.

THE instructions given in the preceding chapter refer principally to the exterior part of the recitation of the Rosary. We shall now examine a little more deeply, and find out the relation and connexion that there is between our way of praying and the prayers used in saying the holy Rosary. It is a point of great importance; for the first thing we need in order to recite a prayer well is to understand it and all its relations. This will furnish us with solid and pious thoughts during our vocal prayer.

As we have already seen, the essence of the Rosary consists in the intimate

union of vocal and mental prayer; that is to say, while we recite fixed prayers we exercise our minds by thinking of the mysteries. We must do both, if we wish to gain the indulgences attached to the Rosary. How are we to do it? If we are to pay attention to the words we use, will not that prevent the contemplation of the mystery? Not at all. We do well if we attend but to one at a time. Settle on the following rules given by St Ignatius in his book on the Spiritual Exercises. In vocal prayer it is not necessary that we should fix our attention entirely on the words we say; for this in such long prayers as the Rosary would be far too difficult to do, would tend to fatigue and weary us, and we should end up by losing all pleasure in praying. But, to recite vocal prayers well, it is sufficient that, while we say the words, we either think on those words or direct our atten-

tion to the person to whom they are addressed; we may think of our relation to that person, of our dependence on the object of our prayers. To repeat what I said before: while you are saying your "Hail, Marys," it is not necessary that you should devote your attention to the words you use, but you should think of the mystery which is under consideration. Imagine you see our Lady in the mystery you contemplate: if she is in her house at Nazareth, or in the Temple at Jerusalem, kneel down in spirit before her; if she is on her journey to Egypt, or elsewhere, accompany her in thought; do in your mind what she does; think of the sufferings she endures, of the virtues she exercises. For all this will provide you with thoughts very important for you to understand, and will teach you valuable lessons; and in order to derive the most profit from your prayers, apply these con-

siderations to yourself, and compare your manner of acting with that of this perfect model of sanctity.

Meanwhile do not lose sight of our Saviour. Remember how our Blessed Lady was always by the side of her divine Son, and how she reflects in herself the virtues of her Redeemer. Ask our Lady what she felt during these incidents; and wait a moment till she speaks to your heart. In each mystery you may consider first the persons connected with it, then the words they spoke, what they did, and finally their virtues and sufferings. You need not consider each of these subjects at the same time; think of one now, of another later on; this will make your prayer more varied. If others, such as St Elizabeth, the Angel Gabriel, St John, enter into the mystery, you can consider them awhile, seeing how they reflected the virtues of the Mother and the Son.

This manner of reciting the Rosary is a very good one. It has the great advantage of teaching us how to meditate. For meditation is nothing else than thinking on the truths of faith and applying them to ourselves, as we do with the mysteries of the Rosary; and so afterwards you will be able to do the same with the other mysteries of the Gospel. Many have thus learned to meditate, and have meditated for a long time without knowing that they were making meditation.

A difficulty may rise up in your mind as to how you are going to finish the Rosary if you take so long over it; and so you may say, "If I am to do all this, I shall never finish the Rosary; it would take me an hour at the least." Believe me, after you have tried it once or twice and become familiar with this method, you will easily be able to say a whole Rosary

in a quarter of an hour. The little pauses you make need only last a second; it is easy to make them, and as we go on thinking of the mysteries, we get through the words quickly enough, more quickly than if we were to think of each word we said. Of course, if you care to do so, you can easily spend an hour over the recitation of the Rosary.

I will now show you another method of reciting the Rosary, by means of which you can very easily unite the words to the mysteries. For you must not think that the words of the "Hail, Mary," of the "Our Father," and of the "Glory be to the Father" have no relation with the mysteries, and that they are there simply to count the number of vocal prayers, and to fix the time for each meditation. On the contrary, there exists a most intimate relation between the mysteries and those chosen prayers. Every "Hail,

Mary" is a grand hymn of praise to our Lady; it is also a supplication, in which we beg our Lady to intercede for us. This is the way with most prayers; they commence with an act of praise in honour of the person to whom we pray, in order to gain that person's favour for us, and they end with a prayer of petition. The praise with which we salute the Blessed Virgin in each "Hail, Mary," is given because of her close relation with our divine Redeemer, that is, because of her divine motherhood. If you consider the words of the "Hail, Mary," you will see that we praise Mary, first, because she is "full of grace," for it was this fullness of grace that rendered her worthy to become the Mother of God. Then we go on to praise her because of her intimate and close relation with our Lord, a union and relation the like of which has never been granted to any other creature.

She is His Mother. This is what is meant by "The LORD is with thee." Then we enumerate the wonderful consequences and effects of her divine motherhood, that maternity which raised Mary so high above all other women, since she alone of all women is both Virgin and Mother; and as JESUS is unique among men, so Mary is unique among women: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb."

Having thus saluted Mary by recounting her great prerogatives, we beg of her to use her dignity as Mother of GOD, by interceding for us: "Holy Mary, Mother of GOD, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death." This is, in brief, the plan of the "Hail, Mary," and these are the ideas it contains. You can now understand the intimate connexion the "Hail, Mary" has with the Rosary. For the Rosary is a hymn in

honour of the divine maternity of our Lady, which we sing in honour of the various scenes of her life; and the "Hail, Mary" is introduced as a tender colloquy, an address which comes from the heart and which arises of itself while we contemplate those mysteries; moreover, the words of the "Hail, Mary" are suited to each mystery and suggest the most suitable thoughts. In every mystery Mary is "full of grace"; in all of them "the LORD is with her." Thus you can select certain words of the "Hail, Mary" and keep them before your mind a little while, applying them to the mystery you are contemplating. So these simple words, "Hail, Mary," can be applied to all the mysteries by imagining them to be repeated to her by all those who presented themselves to her; thus you can think of the angels, the shepherds, the Magi, St Elizabeth, holy Simeon and the others,

all saluting her with the same words. Then, coming to the final petition, you can beg of Mary, through the merits of the mystery you contemplate, to obtain for you, or for others, the grace you intend to ask for in the Rosary. All this can be done as simply, as naturally, as trustingly as a child would ask a favour, all the while you gaze on our dear Mother and rejoice at the sight of her.

But what are we to think about during the "Our Fathers," the Glorias and "I believe"? As soon as you have fixed on the mystery to be contemplated, and formed a picture of it in your mind, commence the "Our Father" by lifting up your heart to GOD, to your heavenly Father, to the Holy Trinity. Whilst you are reciting it, offer up to Him the mystery you are about to contemplate, and meditating on the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, which contain all that

we need ask for, make them part of your intention in saying the Rosary. This representation of the Holy Trinity will be of great use and advantage to you. For the Holy Trinity takes part, the principal part, in all the mysteries, and from the heavens above contemplates their realization with infinite love and complacency. Have you never noticed in the holy pictures painted by the old masters, how they represent the Holy Trinity seated on high, appearing in Mary's room as the angel makes the Annunciation, or hovering over the stable at the Nativity? Well, this is the way in which you must picture the scene for yourself, and offer up to the Three Divine Persons the merits of the mysteries of the Rosary, begging Them to grant the grace you ask in virtue of those merits.

Each mystery begins with an "Our Father" and ends with the "Gloria."

When you say the "Gloria," again lift up your heart to the Holy Trinity, and bow your head with respect; thank GOD for the graces, mercies and gifts He has showered down on us through Mary's part in that mystery. Praise Him for it all, because He did it for our salvation, through His infinite love for us.

As for the "Credo," recall to mind all that I have said earlier about its relation with the whole Rosary. You have seen how the Rosary springs from the "I believe"; how this is the blessed soil in which is planted this garden of our Lady. It is divided into three parts, in honour of the three divine Persons. The first part speaks of our heavenly Father, and of the wonders of the creation; the second refers to His divine Son, and to the glorious work of our redemption; the third regards the HOLY GHOST and the wonderful Church of GOD. In the second part,

which concerns our SAVIOUR, there grows the mystical rose-bush which produces the crown of roses around the mysteries of the MAN-GOD. Fix your attention on it, and make a profound act of faith in your Redeemer, in all that He did for us, and rejoice that you can frequent this garden, led, as it were, by Mary's own hand.

If through any misfortune you find a real difficulty in profoundly meditating on the mysteries, content yourself with paying full attention to them, and recite your Paters and Aves in honour of those mysteries, hoping to share in their merits. This is what the greater number of people do; and it is a good method of reciting the Rosary. It would be also advisable to reflect for a moment on each mystery before you begin the "Our Father," and then recite the prayers with the intention of gaining the desired grace.

I have here tried to put before you

different ways of saying the Rosary well, and that is what has induced me to treat of each at so great length, that you may learn to know more and more of this grand devotion. You have now open before you the entrance to the sanctuary of this garden. You will now understand that the Rosary is not a mere collection and tiresome repetition of words, but a real work of art, full of beauty. It is a work formed by the Holy Ghost. The oftener you recite it, the better you will come to love its beauties; in it you will learn more and more of the divine things, you will derive more and more lessons and examples, more tender thoughts than you would derive from many other devotions. This is why the Rosary has been the chosen prayer of so many saints of God.

CHAPTER X

The Crown of White Roses

Mother most admirable, pray for us.—*Litany of Loreto.*

I AM now going to place before you a few simple thoughts which you can make use of for meditation.

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

First Mystery: The Annunciation

1. CONSIDER, first, how Mary prepared herself for the Incarnation. See her in her quiet and secluded little room. What is she doing there? See! she is reading; not reading useless books, but studying the Sacred Scriptures. She begins to pray. And how she prays! See how reverently, how fervently! What a beautiful sight,

to see Mary at prayer! For whom is she praying? Not for herself alone, but for God's people, for all of us, that the promised Redeemer may come soon. This is how she prepared herself for the great things that were to come to pass; she prepares herself by recollection, prayer and love.

Now see the angel Gabriel! He comes joyfully and gladly, because God has sent him, because it is a source of great joy to him to have a share in our redemption. He comes with respect and dignity, because he represents the infinite majesty of God. He comes with all due propriety, for Mary is his future queen and sovereign.

Hear how sweetly, and with what love, he pronounces the words of salutation. Never before was mortal saluted so respectfully by an angel. Hear what he says in the name of God, as the representative

of God. What an honour for Mary! Shall not I also rejoice with her? I will join my voice in praise and blessing with that of the angel, while heaven and earth bow down in veneration.

And how does Mary receive the angel? She listens silently and thoughtfully, with a sort of fear, to this magnificent salutation. She is frightened before such beauty and sanctity, and remains humble and simple. Listen to this great interview. How prudent, how thoughtful, how virtuous is her reply! Her silence, her reply, both full of virtue. Here we see purity, humility, perfect resignation to the will of God. Where is the heart like unto Mary's? She is truly worthy to become the Mother of God. Her graces are as sublime as the dignity to which she is about to be raised. It is virtue and grace alone that attract our Lord. Mary exercised every virtue, corresponded with every grace;

that is why JESUS chose her for His Mother.

2. Consider the Word made flesh. The Son of GOD took flesh in the pure womb of Mary and became true man, our Brother. When did He become man? When Mary gave her consent; not before. GOD would not have assumed our human nature and redeemed us, had Mary refused her consent. Do you not see in this how much GOD honours Mary, and how He wishes that after Him we should find all our delight in Mary? Mary gives her consent with love and gratitude; she gives it for love of us. Can we ever repay her love? What would have become of us had there been no Redeemer to save us?

3. Finally, see the effect of the Incarnation on Mary. Above all, she is now Mother of GOD, true Mother; JESUS is her Son as truly as we are the children of our mothers. Just ponder awhile on the

sublimity of this dignity. Mary is truly and really Mother of God. Think of the power this gives her with God! Jesus owes His being truly man to Mary; and Mary has over Him all the power a mother has over her own children. Congratulate Mary on her great dignity; rejoice to see her lifted to so high a position, endowed with so much power; rejoice and be glad, as if it were yourself who had received such wonderful favours.

In becoming Mother of God through the Incarnation, Mary becomes our spiritual Mother also; for it was for our sake that Jesus became man, and we are inseparably united to Him as being the members of His mystical body. From the first instant of the Incarnation Mary entered into the designs of God, and felt for us all the love of a mother. Be glad that you have Mary as your mother, and thank God for so great a gift. Prostrate your

self before her in spirit as her child; she will not turn you away. Ask her to remain always your mother, and promise to be always her true child. Tell her of all your wants and necessities, for she loves to shower down gifts with open hands.

Second Mystery: The Visitation

1. First ask yourself why our Lady besired to visit her cousin, St Elizabeth. It was certainly not for the pleasure of travelling about, and wanting some one with whom to talk: such could not have been the motives of Mary, who so loved retirement and recollection. The motive that induced her to make this visit was a holy and supernatural motive. It was God's will; He prompted her to go. The angel had already spoken to Mary about St Elizabeth's having conceived a son, giving this as a sign of the truth of his words. The Holy Spirit had given her to understand the

great work that had taken place in Elizabeth's house; JESUS whom she bore within her, wished to make known His coming to St John, and to bless him, His holy precursor, by making him participate in His grace; and this He wished to do through the instrumentality of Mary. With this intent our Lady set out on her journey. Would that I also always sought to do GOD's will in all things.

2. Contemplate how Mary starts off on her journey, and think of the great virtues she exercised during it. Join yourself, in spirit, to her on the way; imitate her carefulness. When she knows that GOD wishes something to be done, she does not hesitate for a moment. See how modestly she journeys on. She thinks of and speaks to the Holy One within her; to Him she addresses her prayers and sighs. Consider how the first thing she does on entering Elizabeth's house is to

salute her cousin affectionately. Then listen to her glorious hymn, the "Magnificat," in which she relates all the mighty things GOD has done in her. See how these two holy women speak only of heavenly things, of holy things, and not about trifles and the gossip of the world. Ask our Lady to make you pious and virtuous.

3. Dwell on the great fruits of this visit. Saint Elizabeth, full of the HOLY GHOST, prophesies in a wonderful manner, and tells of the Incarnation. The infant John the Baptist is blessed and sanctified in his mother's womb; in a word, the whole house received all sorts of blessings and graces through this simple visit of the Mother of GOD. She is the channel through which all blessings come to us. She who distributes the fruits of the redemption, has asked our SAVIOUR, whom she conceived for love of us, to communicate Himself to us through her. What

is there, what grace however great, that we cannot obtain through Mary, for others or for ourselves? Ask her to come and visit you, and to sanctify you with her presence; and ask her to sanctify the Church and the world, and to give joy to all with her constant visitations.

The result for Mary of her visit to Saint Elizabeth was that she was then for the first time made known to men in her new, great dignity, and honoured by them. Saint Elizabeth's motives for honouring our Lady were the same as ours; she honoured her, as we do, for her exalted virtues: "Blessed art thou who hast believed." Next, she praises her because of her dignity as Mother of GOD: "Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my LORD should come to me?" Take St Elizabeth as a model for honouring Mary; although she is older than Mary, although she is rich in virtues and honoured by GOD,

she praises and blesses Mary, her young cousin, with true humility and with great enthusiasm, because she sees in her the Mother of God. Do you in like manner.

Third Mystery: The Birth of Our Saviour

1. The journey to Bethlehem provides abundant matter for meditation. The undertaking of it was an act of obedience to the commands of the Emperor, commands that were burdensome and troublesome; still Mary did not complain, but submitted in all humility, seeing in this the will of God. Mary was of the royal race of David; she was the living ark of the covenant. See how modestly she travels onward, accommodating herself to every circumstance, content to pass the night in a wretched stable. There were none of the ancestors of the Messias who travelled as poorly and humbly as Mary. She is scorned by all

the people of Bethlehem. She has the word, so dear to us all, from house to house throughout all the streets of the city. What were her feelings and thoughts as she reached the stable? There were those of her dear Lord, who was to be born in poverty, abandonment, and humiliation for love of us, and to suffer and die for love of us. She was contemplating Mary's virginity, after her great sympathy, after her all this should help us to make use of it as her own property, and to take up her abode in your heart. Learn to be humble and to rejoice in all humiliations for the love of God, for love of Jesus.

2. Consider here the feelings of Mary at the birth of Jesus. How great it was for that mother's heart that her Divine Son should be born in poverty and abandonment, in a wretched, unfurnished stable.

amid the snows of winter, with no other resting-place but the hard straw of a manger! How must she have felt her poverty, when she saw that she had nothing to offer to her Saviour! How she would have liked all heaven and earth to crowd round His crib in adoration, homage and love! Yet at the same time how overjoyed she must have been at her virginal delivery, to gaze upon that lovely Child, her Son, her God, whom she had so long yearned to behold!

See with what wonder she looks upon Him; with what fervour and humility she adores Him, offering Him her homage and the homage of heaven and earth. See how ardently she presses Him to her bosom in all the fervour of a mother's love, caressing Him, fondling Him; offering her Babe to God in the name of all mankind. Ponder on all these thoughts, and rejoice with Mary. Give her your

congratulations for so amiable and adorable a Son; offer your heart and services in spirit to that holy family.

3. The announcement of the birth of our LORD, made first to the shepherds and then to the wise men, is another point for meditation in contemplating the Nativity. What joy for Mary to see her little babe recognized and honoured as the Holy One of Israel! The homage of these pious men, their humble faith, their piety, their magnanimity must indeed have been a consolation to that mother's heart. Humbly she receives the honours that they pay to her; and in a simple, loving way that touches their hearts she speaks to these first subjects of her Son.

Next consider the loving care and solicitude with which she tended her infant Son, constantly watching over His crib, her spirit full of recollection, love and

joy ineffable. Her mind pondered over all she had seen and heard; she never left off thinking of it all, that she might communicate it afterwards to us.

Thank her with all your heart for all that she has done for us. Thank JESUS also for His infinite love.

Fourth Mystery: The Presentation in the Temple

1. FIRST consider the thoughts of our Lady, and the intention she had in journeying to Jerusalem; consider the preparations she made for the Presentation. Her thoughts and intentions were those of her SAVIOUR. She desired to fulfil all things according to the law, both in regard to herself and in regard to her Son. True it is that this law was not binding on either JESUS or Mary; nevertheless she fulfilled it; her reasons for so doing were various. The first was her profound

respect for the infinite majesty of God, the Author of the law: wherever Mary perceived the slightest indication of the will of God, she was quick to submit to it. Secondly, she desired to return thanks to God in His temple for all the graces He had bestowed on her, both in her virginal delivery and ever since the birth of Jesus. Lastly, she was prompted by modesty. Imitate this beauty of soul, her freedom from all love of self.

2. Consider the reward she merited by her prompt obedience to the law. This reward was the manifestation of her divine Son as Saviour, and that of her own dignity and greatness. Just as they entered the Temple, the holy old man, Simeon, came in to meet Jesus and His Mother, and announced their coming with joy. This manifestation was one full of wonder and greatness because it took place in the Temple, in all Jerusalem, before

the whole people; on account of those who were present at it, Simeon and Anna, so noted for their holiness; and, finally, because of the way in which the manifestation was made, namely, by words and sentences which unite, as in a magnificent frame, all the grandeur and majesty of the SAVIOUR, His divinity, His humanity, His redeeming Passion and death, His exceptional superiority over all men; in fine, all that the prophets had foretold of Him. See how Simeon points out to Mary that she is to be always by JESUS's side during His life, all through His Passion, sharing in all His greatness, in all His power for the benefit of mankind. Rejoice at the old man's words, and take Simeon and Anna as your models in honouring Mary, for her dignity is of the highest, her greatness most sublime. A sword of sorrow will pierce her heart! Oh, how vividly she sees before her all

the sorrows and trials that are to win her the titles of Mother of Sorrows, Our Lady of Dolours, Queen of Martyrs. Give Mary your sympathy in all her sorrows; she endured them all that she might become *our* mother.

3. Consider also how exactly Mary performed the ceremonies of the presentation. She fulfilled every precept as regards time, place and offering. She performs it with all the fullness and generosity of her heart. The two turtle-doves, the offering of the poor, which she carried, and the ceremony of purification, hid from the eyes of the world her incomparable dignity of Virgin and Mother of God; and placed her among the number of all other poor women. But this did not affect her. The offering up of her Son wounded her loving heart, and pierced it as with a sword. For this offering was not for Jesus, the same as with other children, a mere

ceremony; no, it was a true sacrifice; although Mary received JESUS back into her arms, GOD had stretched His hand over the head of His Divine Son as a sign of accepting the offering; and there remained for Mary only the sorrowful consolation of nursing and rearing her Babe in preparation for the bloody sacrifice of Calvary; a sacrifice that was foreshadowed, in a way, by the offering of the blood of the doves with the prayers of holy Simeon.

Consider, lastly, Mary's devotion during the whole ceremony. One spark of the fire of sacrifice escaped from the Heart of the Son of GOD and, entering the heart of His Mother, inflamed it with burning love. What were the thoughts that occupied the mind of the little SAVIOUR? He had made His first entrance into the Temple, for which he had yearned from the first moment of His conception.

He offered Himself for the first time in place of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, a worthy sacrifice, a magnificent offering. Never before had a like sacrifice been offered here to God. All the ceremonies, all the sacrifices, all the priests of the Old Law were but a mystical representation of this sacrifice; from it they received what value they had; from it they derived all that they contained of perfection and sanctity. God the Father, from His throne on high, looked down on this offering with infinite complacency, and filled the Temple with His presence. Mary took part in this sacrifice, uniting herself to it; the feelings of her heart were those of the Heart of Jesus; she offered herself with Jesus for the salvation of mankind. It was the Saviour's wish to be offered to God by Mary's hands alone.

Ask Mary to offer up your heart and your will to her Divine Son. Beg of her

to teach you to adore JESUS with the simple faith of Simeon.

Fifth Mystery: The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

CONSIDER, first, the bitter grief of Mary at the loss of her Son. Her one great desire was to draw near to GOD; and so she had come joyfully to worship in His Temple at Jerusalem. The journey thither had been a most happy one. She walked by the side of Jesus, who did not require to be carried now as during the flight into Egypt, but who was old enough to walk along with her, chatting innocently as only children can; and Mary rejoiced to see her Son in His little dress as a child of Israel, all buoyant with the brightness of boyhood, and walking along with the aid of His little pilgrim's staff.

He entered the Temple and began to pray with a fervour and devotion that

moved all hearts, and then suddenly there comes a cruel blow, a cause for bitter grief! Oh, how sad to part from such a Son, so holy, so beautiful, so loving, so obedient; from Him who was her only joy, her only One, her loved One! Such was the thought that suddenly came into her mind and touched her Mother's heart. Would He be robbed and stolen from her? would He be sold and ill-treated? When would that hour come, which Simeon had foretold, that hour of sorrow and grief? This dolour was increased because of her humility, for she was ever thinking how unworthy she was to watch over and protect so precious a treasure. Notwithstanding all her care Jesus found occasion, amidst all the confusion of a festival day and the crowds joining the caravan, to return quietly to the Temple without Mary or Joseph knowing it.

Mary knew that she had watched carefully over her Son, and so she had nothing to blame herself for on this score. But she had a deep conviction that she was unworthy to act towards the Son of God as Mother and teacher and companion. Who can fathom the sorrow of that Mother's heart? Oh, meditate intently on the dolours of this Queen of Martyrs; think often of her anguish and grief.

2. Consider, also, how our Lady acted during her hour of trial. See her resignation and patience amid all her grief; see how willingly, how completely she submits to the will of God! She complains not, neither does she murmur against God or her Son. In her profound humility she blames herself alone; and she gives grateful thanks to God for the joy she had experienced during the time His Son was under her care. She does not sit

down to mourn her grief at this bitter loss. She rises immediately, and begins searching and making inquiries, questioning every one she meets; no road is too long for her to traverse, no way too wearisome to walk. She does all this quietly, modestly, yet earnestly. Oh, how much can we not learn from Mary in this her search for her Divine Son! Follow her, accompany her in spirit, console her. But how? By thinking and asking yourself why God permitted all this grief. It was in order to teach us to imitate Jesus and Mary as our models that we might learn from them how we ought to accept crosses and trials, which come from the hand of God; as, for example, when parents are asked by God to make a sacrifice of their children when called by a holy vocation, and children are prompted to leave father and mother and home to devote themselves to the service

of God. Jesus and Mary have set us an example how to make this sacrifice.

Place yourself in spirit in the presence of the Blessed Virgin and offer to her all the pious thoughts that the contemplation of this mystery may have inspired into your soul. She will accept them willingly.

3. Finally, consider the consolation that the Blessed Virgin felt in this mystery. What must have been her joy on entering the Temple, to find her Son safe and sound, sitting amongst all those learned men, and speaking with a wisdom that moved all present to admiration and wonder! All marvelled at the sagacity of the little Boy. There were all those masters and doctors of the law listening attentively to the words of this gentle and loving little Master. What a joy and consolation for that Mother's heart: And, oh, that greater joy to see Him so willing

and obedient to accompany her to Nazareth, to dwell with her.

So the remaining years of the Hidden Life of JESUS rolled on, filling Mary's heart with joy and peace and love; those eighteen years during which He was ever by her side, working for her and for St Joseph, obedient to her every wish and word, and advancing "in age and grace and wisdom before GOD and men." This was the happiest part of Mary's life. Rejoice with her, and pray that you may find it your delight to "be about your Father's business," and to be subject to your superiors. Pray that when you lose JESUS by falling into sin, you may diligently seek and find Him in the sacraments of Penance and of the Holy Eucharist.

CHAPTER XI

The Crown of Crimson Roses

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

First Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me.—*Cant.* i, 12.

HERE you may consider our Blessed Lady present in spirit by the side of her divine Son in the garden, sharing in all His pain and sorrow. For, of a certainty, though she was not actually present, still she knew clearly all that took place there, and she had a share in these sufferings of our SAVIOUR which were the beginning of His Passion.

1. Consider first how the Blessed Virgin, knowing all the agony which JESUS was to suffer in the Garden of Gethse-

mane, embraced willingly her part in them. They were bitter torments: first, because they pierced the soul and the heart; secondly, because they were long continued, painful, wearying, without any consolation, full of repulsiveness—in a word, they were all that can torment and wound the heart; finally, because they were so infinitely great and intense; so intense that they caused our Saviour to tremble all over, and to cry aloud that this chalice might pass from Him; so intense, that they caused Jesus to sweat blood. And Mary knew all this. She beheld, in her heart, this sea of sorrows increasing and raging and swelling more and more. Only a mother's heart like hers could fathom the depth of that ocean of bitterness and sound its immensity. What she must have felt no pen can describe.

2. Mary knew, moreover, what caused

these torments which so afflicted the Sacred Heart. She knew that its anguish was due to the unjust and cruel death that was so soon to be inflicted, and which JESUS' imagination now pictured to Him so perfectly and vividly. She knew that the repulsiveness arose from the countless number of frightful and abominable sins whose guilt JESUS, who was so pure and perfect, was to take upon Himself; sins that men would commit again and again till the end of time; and He suffered most deeply from the ingratitude of men who would make Him no return for all He had done for them; not only would they not thank Him for it all, but they would hate and persecute Him. Lastly, JESUS was profoundly afflicted by the thought that His Passion was to bear so little fruit. His sufferings and death were enough to save the whole world, to redeem all men from Adam to the end of

time. Yet, how sad to think of the many who would not profit by it, because of their impenitence and love of evil! This was a bitter trial for the loving Heart of JESUS!

3. The Blessed Virgin saw, moreover, how willingly her Son undertook to suffer these torments. It was His will to suffer and die; otherwise no man could have inflicted so cruel tortures and death upon the Holy One of GOD. He endured His afflictions with patience and resignation. As the pains and sorrows crowded more and more upon His Heart, JESUS persisted all the more in His determination and resolution to die for us that He might redeem us; and His infinite love triumphed over His human nature.

Consider Mary's compassion for JESUS during all His anguish and affliction, during all the labours and sufferings of His Sacred Heart; how she prayed JESUS

not to abandon us poor sinners! how she begged of Him to be mindful of her and of those saints who would be faithful to Him! Ask our Lady to offer to her Son and SAVIOUR a little offering from yourself, namely, the resolution to remain faithful in His divine service, never to deny Him any sacrifice that He may ask of you, never to abandon Him, but to remember always His agony in the Garden when He sends you any little crosses, trials, suffering. Tell Him that you wish to be remembered among those few faithful souls who have tried to make some small return for the great things He endured for us.

Second Mystery: The Scourging of our Lord at the Pillar

IT is not impossible that Mary may have chanced to find a place among the crowd of onlookers in the place where

our SAVIOUR was scourged. Picture to yourself the feelings that stirred her heart during this torment.

1. Dwell for a little while on the events that preceded the scourging. The unjust and cruel sentence is pronounced, and JESUS is led down the staircase of the Pretorium to the pillar in the centre of the courtyard below. Then come the executioners with their terrible rods and whips and lashes loaded with iron hooks. Approaching JESUS, they roll up their sleeves, and, savagely seizing our SAVIOUR, they strip Him and fasten Him to the pillar. See how Mary's heart is grieved and afflicted to see her Son so ill-treated by that ruffian mob; see how she buries her face in her hands to hide from her eyes the dreadful torture.

2. Consider next how the terrible sentence was carried out. Mary stood there and heard the whistling and hissing of

the whips and lashes as they writhed in their rise and fall; she heard the blows that rained upon the Redeemer's Sacred Body. First the lashes raised weals and bruises, then they cut and tore, and mangled the whole body, while the blood flowed in torrents and ran down to the ground. Mary heard the curses, insults and imprecations of the soldiers and the mob; and oh, grief for that Mother's heart! she heard the moans and cries of her agonized Son; she felt in her soul the blows and wounds. She burst into sobs and tears. Yet during all the torture she felt no anger or hatred against the enemies of her Son. In sympathy with the Sacred Heart of JESUS, she was all love for His tormentors, praying for them and for us who were the cause of all His anguish and torture.

3. The scourging ended, JESUS is unloosed from the pillar, and falls to the

ground fainting with exhaustion and pain; and there they leave Him lying, "as it were, a worm and no man, the outcast of men." Oh, what a terrible scene for that Virgin Mother! How she longed to be able to run and help her Son! How she yearned to be able to bathe His wounds, to anoint them and soothe them, to cover them with her kisses and tears! But no, she could not do anything for Him, not even the least thing. See how she glances round to see if there are any there who having once been cured or comforted by JESUS now feel compassion for Him in His sufferings. But there is none; not one. Oh, do you offer her your compassion and love for her dear Son. Do not forget that it was for your sins that our loving SAVIOUR endured these stripes and blows and bitter shame. Oh, earnestly promise Him that with the help of His grace you will never again offend Him by sin.

Third Mystery: The Crowning with Thorns

PROBABLY MARY was not very far distant when her Son was crowned with thorns. The body of soldiers who guarded JESUS stood by during the scourging, and it was they who now began to mock Him.

1. Consider in the first place what brought about this fresh and unusual torment. JESUS was placed under a body-guard till the time should come for His crucifixion. The body-guard led Him to the barracks yard. Our Blessed SAVIOUR was weary, weak and exhausted, and trembled as He thought of the cruel death so soon to be endured. But the rough soldiery would give Him no peace or rest; they were idle, insolent and brutish men, a cowardly mob. Having at the time nothing to do, they made JESUS an object of sport. One of them

remarks that JESUS had wanted to be chosen king of the Jews; and this suggests the idea of crowning Him as mock king. Then arose shouts of applause and approval. How the Blessed Virgin must have trembled at hearing these shouts and cries which announced that a new torture was preparing for her divine Son!

2. Consider how this cruel sport was carried on. They roughly set our SAVIOUR on a stone pillar for a throne, and clothed Him with a ragged purple garment. For a crown they place on His sacred head a crown of sharp thorns, and drive it in by dint of blows. To complete the mockery they bow the knee before Him, and rising, spit upon His sacred face, laughing coarsely in derision. Then they strike Him and give Him blows. Oh, it was a scene of infernal malice and bitter shame that the King of kings, GOD almighty, the eternal Son of the Father, should be

treated thus. There sat our loving Saviour, meek and uncomplaining, crowned with a crown of cruel thorns, His head and face covered with blood and filthy spittle. Oh the mockery and the bitterness of it! And this was He who sits on a throne amid the legions of angels who serve and adore Him in heaven.

3. Consider lastly what Mary suffered during all this torture and mockery. She could hear the shouts and cries of laughter. She learnt what her Son was suffering: the shame, the pain, the blasphemies; and she could not raise a finger to help Him. How her cries rose to God asking for help to bear all this torture and torment! Offer her a little consolation by resolving to be meek and gentle, and never to offend God by grievous sin, for sin is but a renewal of the mockery of Jesus' kingship.

Fourth Mystery: The Carrying of the Cross

1. See how our Lord takes the cross upon His shoulder. See the mournful procession to the place of execution. See the crowd of curious sightseers, the Pharisees, scribes, priests, soldiers and executioners. In the midst of them totters a Man carrying a cumbrous, heavy cross, and with a crown of thorns upon His head. What a sad sight! It is the Saviour of the world. He is treated as a common felon, and must carry His own cross. See how the great weight of the heavy beams, His weakness and the rocky ground cause Him to totter and stumble. Yet He goes on in patience and humility and meekness, resolved to die upon this instrument of torture. As Jesus accepted His cross with love and resignation, so do you accept every trial and pain.

2. Consider how our Blessed Lady

longed to help JESUS to carry the cross. She need not have accompanied Him on this weary journey; but she did. She wished to have a share in the way of the cross, that she might afford some little consolation to her Son when all His disciples had abandoned Him; in order to set us an example how we should bear our cross; and lastly, in order to give honour and glory to GOD, because she knew that the cross was a glorious proof of GOD's love for us. She did not mind the shame of it in the eyes of the world; she cared little for the ignominy of it. Oh, imitate the conduct of this noble Mother's heart.

3. Consider the meeting of JESUS and His Mother. See her joy at once more beholding Him face to face, and yet her deep sorrow at seeing Him in such a state! Then truly did the sword of sorrow pierce her heart. She follows her Son

in His weary journey. She sees Simon the Cyrenean take up the cross behind our LORD. How gladly would she have carried it herself. She is full of gratitude when Veronica wipes the face of JESUS. She sees the Jewish women weeping. Thus she accompanies our SAVIOUR all the way to Calvary. Do you accompany her in spirit. At least, bear your cross, follow in the way of Christian virtue; patiently endure the disappointments and trials that GOD sends you. Your cross is but a small part of the SAVIOUR's, accept it willingly and lovingly.

Fifth Mystery: The Crucifixion and Death of our Lord

1. CONSIDER first the preparation for the crucifixion. See how the cross is placed, and the hammer and nails got ready. Then consider JESUS. See how His Heart trembles at the sight of that bed of death. He simply

moistens His lips with the drugged wine, because He does not wish to be insensible to the suffering of the crucifixion, but desires to endure them with full consciousness. He is stripped and roughly thrust upon the cross. Consider how Mary hears the strokes of the hammer, and sees the face of her Son grow pale and wan with the intensity of the torture. She hears His words: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." What a scene for that Mother's heart!

2. Consider next how JESUS suffered for three long hours, hanging there upon the cross, and died upon it. Mary sees her divine Son nailed to the tree of the cross, lifted on high in the midst of His enemies. What does she do during all this? She advances to the cross, so near that she can touch those transfixed feet with her hands, and hear the slightest groans and failing words of her Son. Here she

remains for three long hours beside her abandoned and crucified SAVIOUR. She suffers with Him; His abandonment, the insults, abuse, shame and pain which He endures she feels in her own loving heart. She sees everything that takes place; she hears every word spoken until the end comes, and JESUS, our loving SAVIOUR, dies on the tree of the cross. Hers was a faithful and brave heart, the heart of a true mother! She suffered all these dolours for love of JESUS and for love of us. She offers up this bloody sacrifice of her Son for us, as she offered up the unbloody sacrifice thirty-three years before in the Temple.

3. What followed after our SAVIOUR'S death? Consider how helpless Mary felt at not being able to take down her divine Son from the cross and bury Him. Consider how consoled she was when those holy and devout men came and, reverently taking JESUS down from the cross, placed

His dead body in her arms. At the sight of that torn and bleeding frame she felt unspeakable anguish; her heart was moved to the deepest compassion for her Son and to wonderful love for us. Surely we ought to love her always, and never to abandon her. Remember that she sacrificed for us all that she held most dear. Oh, how beautiful was that newly-born Babe of Bethlehem when she offered Him to us! And how did we receive Him? Make some good resolution to repair and atone for all your neglect.

Lastly, she places her Son in the sepulchre. Imagine her grief as she closes the door of the tomb. What was the whole world to her now that her all was gone? What a sad return home! What a night of sorrow! Her heart and thoughts were in the sepulchre where lay her crucified SAVIOUR.

CHAPTER XII

The Crown of Golden Roses

Come and thou shalt be crowned.—*Cant.* iv, 8.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

First Mystery: The Resurrection

WE shall now consider the ineffable consolation and joy that the Blessed Virgin felt at the resurrection of her divine Son. For, although we do not read in the Gospels that our SAVIOUR appeared to His Blessed Mother, still we have good reasons for believing that He did appear to her. He appeared to all His disciples, to Mary Magdalen and to many others. And would He forget to console His own Mother? For through being His Mother Mary was brought into the closest

relation with JESUS, a relation more intimate than any other in the world; and, besides, she had toiled for Him, and suffered with Him more than any other. So He would surely visit her.

1. Well, then, consider how Mary prepared herself to receive the visit of her Son. Her joy, her anxiety, her longing for Him kept all sleep from her eyes. Perhaps it was thus with you the night before your first Holy Communion. Oh, how Mary yearned for this new birth! This birth from the womb of the earth was to be far more glorious and magnificent than that first lowly birth at Bethlehem. Her every thought and desire was to see her Son rise from the darkness of the tomb. She prayed most earnestly for Him to come and visit her. She tidied her little room and prepared it to receive her Sovereign Visitor. She adorned the window ledge with myrtle boughs to per-

fume the room, and sang unceasingly: "Come, my Beloved, come to Thy garden, for the winter is now past, and the rain is over and gone . . . and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land."* O loving and faithful Mother!

2. Consider, next, how JESUS came and appeared to Mary. If He appeared so loving and glad and glorious to the apostles and holy women, how would He not appear to His holy Mother? Mary found all her joy in knowing that JESUS now lived in glory and happiness, a joy intensified by the glory with which He now appeared before her, and by the undying love He bore her. See how respectfully He salutes His Mother; how He embraces her and thanks her for the fidelity and love with which she followed Him during His Passion. Consider Mary's joy. Imagine the joy of a mother who sees

*Cant. ii, 10, 11, 12.

her son after a long absence: how much greater would it not be if she had given up that son for dead, and now finds him still living, happy, rich and powerful; and learn from this the delight that filled Mary's heart. See how she gazes on her SAVIOUR's glorious countenance. See how lovingly she presses Him to her bosom; how feelingly she reclines her head on that divine Heart, which, amid all Its glory and splendour, is still the Heart of her divine Son. Imagine the words of love and devotion that pass between them. Mary is once again the joyful and happy Mother of GOD. Rejoice with her: *Regina cæli, lætare!* She surely deserves our greatest thanks and gratitude.

3. Mary rejoices not at her own happiness only, but also at the happiness of the apostles and holy women. She rejoices that our Redeemer appeared to them also, giving them the most convincing proofs

of His Resurrection, and conversing with them in a friendly, loving way. She rejoices at the various arrangements and provisions made, during the forty days before the Ascension, for the continuation and preservation of the Church. Her heart is so good and perfect that she is glad at our joy quite as much as at her own. Learn from Mary to rejoice in the will of God, and at the success and happiness of your neighbour. Let your joy be modest, without noisiness; let it be interior, the happiness of prayer. This is true Christian joy.

Second Mystery: The Ascension

1. Consider, first, how after the farewell meal Mary followed her Son from Jerusalem to Mount Olivet. She had accompanied Him everywhere: to Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth, Calvary; and now she follows Him to the Mount of Olives, whence

He is soon to ascend into heaven. The hour has come for Him to leave them all. The SAVIOUR could no longer remain on earth in His human form. This earth is not a perpetual dwelling-place for any-one, much less for the King of Heaven. JESUS was of heaven; thence He had come, thither He was about to return, in order to show us that heaven is the glorious resting-place for us at the end of our sufferings and labours on earth. Imitate the Blessed Virgin in her constancy and faithfulness in remaining close to JESUS wherever He went. Ask her to obtain for you the grace never to abandon JESUS by falling into sin.

2. Picture to your mind our Lady present at the Ascension of her Son. How tender was that last farewell between the Son and the Mother! How reverently she receives His last blessing. How she is lost in contemplation while JESUS ascends in all

His glory and splendour! The heavens open, and legions of the blessed spirits descend to meet their LORD. Mary remains lost in wonder at the glorious spectacle. See her beautiful face all lit up with a resplendent light! A heavenly joy fills her soul. She follows JESUS in a vision and sees Him pass along the rows of mighty angels up to the throne prepared for Him at the right hand of the Father. Can you contemplate the devotion, love and happiness of the Blessed Virgin without feeling inflamed with love for her?

3. Consider, lastly, how the angels appear and say, "Thus He will come again." He will come once more in all His glory, resplendent as the sun, to bring you with Him to heaven, to bring all His faithful friends and servants to enjoy eternal happiness. For this He ascended into heaven, that He might open for us its gates, to take possession of it in our name, to pre-

pare a place for us there, to guard and guide us from His throne on high. JESUS cannot forget us amid His glory. He thinks ever of us; He cares for us always. These thoughts brought joy to Mary's heart at separating from JESUS on Mount Olivet, and these same thoughts were a consolation to her for the remainder of her life. Do you so live that you may one day enjoy the sight of the Redeemer in His glory.

Third Mystery: The Descent of the Holy Ghost

1. PICTURE to yourself our Blessed Lady in the midst of the apostles, preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Consider the intimate and important part Mary had in this mystery as spiritual Mother of the Church; it was the fruit of the Ascension of her divine Son and

the birth of the Church of God. During the preparation no one did as much to attract and draw down the Holy Ghost as Mary did. How was this? Because of her great virtues, which rendered her heart a fit dwelling-place for the spirit of God; because of her prayers, which arose incessantly to the throne of God, and were so acceptable to the Father; lastly, because of her great desire and yearning for the coming of the Promised of the Son of God.

2. Contemplate next the actual descent of the Holy Spirit. Mary was seated in the midst of the disciples, and received, with them, the Holy Ghost, but in a greater degree, with more fullness than all they. See how recollected and reserved she sits there. Her countenance is lit up with a heavenly grace. It is the fire and joy of the Holy Spirit that burns within her. Her soul is filled with interior gifts and graces of virtue and holiness. The joy

of the Holy Ghost fills her heart in an inexpressible way, because on that day the Apostles became true witnesses to the truth of Christ; and because on that day we were conceived by the Church.

3. Consider, lastly, how the Holy Ghost was communicated then through Mary, and is communicated every day to us in a special way through her. For the Blessed Virgin, as Mother of divine grace, is the principal instrument of the Holy Spirit for communicating His graces to us. Who has converted more sinners than she? Who obtains more graces for us? Who makes us more holy? If then you wish to obtain the gifts, graces and blessings of the Holy Ghost, draw near to Mary by prayer, for she it is who distributes all graces to men.

Fourth Mystery: The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven

1. See the death-bed of the Blessed Virgin. How different it is from ours! By the death-bed of man all is sorrow, anguish and pain. By Mary's, all is peaceful, calm and beautiful; no pain, no sorrow, no grief, Her only weakness is through excess of love. How peacefully she expires! As the ripe fruit in all its beauty and sweetness falls to the ground under the force of a gentle breeze; as the cloud of fragrant incense floats up from the burning charcoal; as the rosebud expands at the gentle touch of the light and heat of the sun, so, calmly, lightly and beautifully, Mary's soul winged its way to God. Such a death is perfect life. Ask your loving Mother to obtain for you the grace of a happy death.

2. Contemplate, next, the burial of our Lady. Tradition tells us that all the apostles were present at her death. She must surely have addressed to each one of them a few parting words of consolation, and have given them her blessing. Then her body is carried to the tomb. Oh, this was a heavy sorrow for the apostles, and yet, at the same time, a consolation. For they were certain that the Blessed Virgin was in heaven, and would be the mediatrix and advocate of the Church.

3. Lastly, contemplate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. In this she somewhat resembles her divine Son. She had longed to die, because her Son had died; He remained but three days in the tomb, and His Body was incorrupt. He arose again on the third day, re-uniting His Soul to His Body, which was now glorified and gifted with new life. So it was with Mary. JESUS raised her body from the

tomb after three days and re-united it to her now glorified soul, and raised it to heaven. And this in all justice, because she had never sinned, because she was His Mother, and because she had suffered so great sufferings and pains for His sake. Ask Mary to keep you from sin, to teach you to be pure, that one day you may be happy with her in heaven.

Fifth Mystery: The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Heaven

1. Mary is taken up body and soul into heaven. What a glorious ascent! Her form is beautiful and resplendent, glorious as the sun! And why is this? Because her virtues, her good works, her purity, her humility, her charity have woven for her a vesture of matchless beauty. How the angels receive her with joy and gladness! How they admire her beauty, perfection and

majesty! Imagine Mary's delight and happiness at being once more with her Divine Son, never more to be separated from Him! When the disciples came three days afterwards to the sepulchre, they found in it naught but the most fragrant flowers; and as they gazed into the tomb they heard heavenly voices singing in harmony. What was the meaning of the flowers and songs? They were a tribute to Mary's sanctity and virtuous life. Let us take a lesson from this to live a life of purity and patience.

2. Mary was seated on a throne at the right hand of her beloved Son, and crowned as Queen of heaven and earth. How our SAVIOUR rejoiced to receive Mary into heaven; to bestow on her His cares and attentions in return for her having received Him on earth and for her having tended Him with such loving devotion. He rejoiced to give her a heavenly life in

return for the life she had given to Him on earth. He rejoiced to adorn her with the crown of majesty and sovereign power in return for her having served Him faithfully, for having accompanied Him in toil and pain and humiliation. He gives her dominion over all His kingdom; He makes her sovereign mistress of the heavens and the earth and all the glory of them; He crowns her brow with the diadem of glory and honour and power. *Regina cæli, lætare!*

3. Lastly, see how Mary reigns now over all. Her power is immense. All passes through her hands. Hers is not the mere title of sovereignty, but she really rules and governs. Graces, blessings, protection, we receive all things through her. And how does she exercise her power? For our good alone. In this she is like to her Divine Son. He rules and governs for our good, for our happiness and pro-

sperity. So it is with Mary. Let us take confidence at the thought. Our Mother is rich, she is powerful, she has dominion over all things. Why then should we look upon ourselves as poor and needy? How can we be sad when we have such a Mother to whom we can go in time of need. Oh, ask Mary to be queen over your heart. Ask her to come and rule its affections, to purify them, to centre them all on Jesus; that you may love Him and His Mother, and all others for their sake, and so come to love them one day in heaven.

CHAPTER XIII

The Singer's Reward

Blessed is the man that watcheth daily at my gates, at the doors of my house.—*Proverbs* viii, 34.

I HAVE sung you a long hymn in honour of the Holy Rosary, and now I am going to ask an alms for the singer as a reward for his task. And what shall I ask? That you will make the firm resolution to recite the Rosary of our Blessed Lady every day of your life. I can ask nothing better for yourself, for me, for the Blessed Virgin. Surely it will be a joy for me in heaven to think of the good I shall have occasioned you. It will be of great profit to me to have contributed in some little way to the honour of Mary, and to the good of my neighbour. Happy you, if you will follow my advice!

How pleased our Mother will be with the fresh and fragrant roses you will thus place daily at her feet! Think of the blessings she will shower on the little garden, at all times, in winter and in summer, when owing to dryness and want of warmth it fails to produce every day the very best of flowers. Test it. The roses that you produce will work your eternal salvation.

And for yourself this devotion will be a source of great joy; the greater, the more devoutly you practise it. Finally, you will begin to feel a real love for the Rosary, so that you will not be able to pass a single day without reciting it. It will become a faithful friend, and without it you will not be able to live.

Perhaps you will say that you cannot find time to recite it. Can you not spare one little quarter of an hour either in the morning or evening, or when going to

your business, to offer up a Rosary to our Lady? Set apart every day a few moments for speaking to your Mother in heaven, for telling her your wants and needs, to ask her help. You can surely find some time for this. We can find time for everything which we have at heart; if it does not present itself, we make it. And if for any real cause you cannot find time some day to recite your Rosary, say it twice on the following day. Thus you will be always in Mary's keeping and will be preserved from ever so much sin and evil. If you cannot recite a whole Rosary every day, say one or two mysteries, for a part is better than none. Five mysteries every day is not too much, nor is it too little. Say them faithfully, and you will derive much grace and profit.

I can assure you that as your years draw to a close it will be no small consolation to you to be able to say that you

never missed a day without saying your Rosary. It will be a comfort to you on your death-bed. True children of the Rosary die peacefully in the LORD. If you wish your bed of death to be a bed of roses, say the Rosary every day. The day will come when a Rosary will be placed in your icy cold hands, and thus you will be buried. And what will be the meaning of this? It will mean that during life you were a faithful lover of the Rosary, and that with your Rosary you wished to knock at the gates of heaven. You could not choose a better way for presenting yourself at your Father's mansions, the abode of GOD. Crying out in the name of the Rosary, you will have the gates of heaven opened to you. Mary, the Queen of the most holy Rosary, will come to take you by the hand, to receive you with open arms and introduce you into eternal life. The roses with which you will see her

crowned are those with which you honoured her every day. Taking the crown in her hands, she will encircle your brow with it. Thus your Rosaries will have proved for your true evergreens, flowers of immortality, your joy for ever.

"Blessed is the man that watcheth daily at the gates of my house; he that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the LORD."*

* Proverbs viii, 34, 35.

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The Garden of Roses of Our Lady.

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